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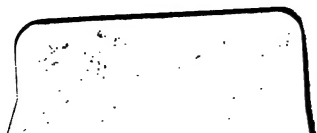


THE
BELOVED PRINCE





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THE BELOVED PRINCE.



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THE
BELOVED PRINCE:

A MEMOIR OF

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE CONSORT.

BY

WILLIAM NICHOLS.



WESLEYAN CONFERENCE OFFICE;
2, CASTLE-STREET, CITY-ROAD.

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MDCCLXXX.

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BIRTH—CHILDHOOD—EDUCATION.

1819—1881.

I HAVE a wondrous house to build,
A dwelling humble, yet divine ;
A lowly cottage to be filled
With all the jewels of the mine.
How shall I build it strong and fair,
This noble house, this lodging rare,
So small and modest, yet so great ?
How shall I fill its chambers bare,
With use, with ornament, with state ?

My God hath given the stone and clay,
'Tis I must fashion them aright ;
'Tis I must mould them day by day,
And make my labour my delight !
This cot, this palace, this fair home,
This pleasure house, this holy dome,
Must be in all proportions fit,
That heavenly messengers may come
To lodge with him who tenants it.

CHARLES MACKAY.



(The Castle of Rosenau.)

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH—CHILDHOOD—EDUCATION.

1819-1831.

PRINCE ALBERT was the second son of Ernest, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, and of Louise, daughter of Augustus, Duke of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg;

and was born on the morning of the 26th of August, 1819, at the Rosenau, a beautiful summer residence belonging to his father.

On the 19th of September the little Prince—whom his grandmother had described as “looking about like a little squirrel with a pair of large black” (blue) “eyes”—was christened in the Marble Hall at the Rosenau, and received the usual princely abundance of Christian names—FRANCIS CHARLES AUGUSTUS ALBERT EMMANUEL; the name by which he was known throughout life being the last but one in the series, and having a special family significance, as being also the name of one of the two sons of Frederick the Gentle, Elector of Saxony, who were carried off by his chamberlain—moved by revenge—from the castle of Altenburg in the night of July 8th, 1455. Prince Albert's only brother, who was born fourteen months previously to him, was designated by the corresponding name of ERNEST, being that of the other little Prince who had been abducted in the same adventure of the olden times. These two names had for many generations been distinctive of the two branches into which the great Saxon family had been divided; but both the young Princes belonged to the Ernestine, or elder, branch, which had, in the sixteenth century, been compelled, on account of its devotion to the Protestant faith, to surrender its inheritance to the younger, or Albertine, branch.

Superintendent Genzler, the minister who officiated at the baptism of the little Prince, breathed earnest aspirations with regard to his future life, which were

remarkably fulfilled, and of which the following passages are specially noteworthy, when read by the light of his subsequent history: "The good wishes with which we welcome this infant as a Christian, as one destined to be great on earth, and as a future heir to everlasting life, are the more earnest when we consider the high position in life in which he may one day be placed, and the sphere of action to which the will of God may call him, in order to contribute more or less to the promotion of truth and virtue, and to the extension of the kingdom of God. . . . The thoughts and supplications of the loving mother are: that her beloved son may one day enter into the kingdom of God as pure and as innocent after the trials of this life as he is at this moment (the joy and hope of his parents) received into the communion of this Christian Church, whose vocation it is to bring up and form upon earth a God-fearing race."

As to his infant loveliness we have not only the witness of his mother and grandmothers and other admiring kinsfolk, but also that of the painter who portrayed him when four years of age, and from whose picture the well-known engraving by Holl was copied, which gives a high idea of the attractive appearance of the child. His mother writes of him: "Albert is splendid—of extraordinary beauty. He has large blue eyes, a little mouth, a delicate nose, and dimples on each cheek. He is tall and lively, and always merry. He has three teeth, and, though only eight months old, already begins to walk." Again, two months later: "Albert is always lively, merry, and

good, and has seven teeth; he already walks, sometimes quite alone, and says 'Papa' and 'Mamma.' Is he not a little prodigy at ten months?" "Albert," says his grandmother, the Duchess of Coburg, in 1822, "is much smaller than his brother, and lovely as a little angel with his fair curls." A little later, February 14th, 1823, she writes: "The little boys have interrupted me, for you know how little one can do during such a visit. A couple of boys always find means to be noisy, which, and the loud talking, calls for many a scolding from grandmamma. They are very good boys on the whole, very obedient, and easy to manage. Albert used to rebel a little sometimes; but a grave face brings the little fellow to submit. Now he obeys me at a look. Some weeks ago he alarmed us by an attack of croup, but leeches and a blister quickly relieved it. If anybody complains now, he says, very wisely, 'You must put on a blister.'"

Shortly after the last-mentioned date the two young Princes were taken from the charge of their excellent nurse, Madame Müller, and placed under the care of a tutor, Herr Florschütz. It might have been supposed that so young and tender a child as Prince Albert then was would have been distressed, for a time at least, at the change and separation from his kind nurse. But it was not so; for he had already a great dislike to petticoat government, and, rejoicing at the transfer to a "dominie," at once became warmly attached to his new guardian, who was both nurse and tutor, and who had "just and honest pride" in retaining his love and friendship to the last day of the Prince's life.

Little Albert was remarkable, even at this early stage of his life, for those sterling qualities which were so strongly characteristic of him in after years. Though rather delicate than robust, he was thorough-going and enthusiastic both in work and play. That love of occupation which so conspicuously marked his grown-up years distinguished him also as a child. His studies were no task to him, but a source of delight ; while his active sports and amusements were pursued with equal zest and energy. His intellectual readiness and thoughtful disposition were already noticeable ; and his force of character made him the leading spirit and ruler when with his elder brother and other playmates.

He began to keep a journal before he was six years old, but, unfortunately, did not continue this good habit through life. The artless, truthful records which he made at this early age are childlike and natural. Thus, on the 21st of January, 1825, he writes : " When I got up this morning I was very happy : I washed myself, and then was dressed ; after which I played for a little while, then the milk was brought, and afterwards dear papa came to fetch us to breakfast. After breakfast dear papa showed us the English horses. The little white one can trot very fast, but the chestnut one is rather clumsy. After we had seen the horses we did our lessons, and then put on our boots and went to the Hof-garden. On our way home we met the little Ledermanns. Then we went home to dinner.

"After dinner we drove to the Rosenau. Here

dear papa was shooting, and we went a little way with the shooting party. Waldmann was always wanting to run and chase the partridges, but we would not let him. Sometimes, however, he ran away with the string, and we were forced to run fast after him to catch him again. We drove home, played, and then went downstairs to dinner, but that had long been over. We then visited our cousins, came upstairs again and dined, and then wrote our journals. Now I am sleepy, I will pray and go to bed."

This is not at all a badly-written record for a little fellow not quite five-and-a-half years old: on the contrary, it is at once simple, straightforward, and intelligent. The following is dated January 23rd: "When I awoke this morning I was ill. My cough was worse. I was so frightened that I cried. Half the day I remained in bed, and only got up at three o'clock in the afternoon. I did a little drawing, then I built a castle and arranged my arms; after that I did my lessons, and made a little picture and painted it. Then I played with Noah's ark, then we dined, and I went to bed and prayed."

Swiftly and happily passed these pleasant days of childhood. The only great trouble of that period—a trouble which probably was not felt at the time by the young Prince—was the growing estrangement between his ducal parents, which resulted in a separation in 1824, when the Duchess left Coburg, and never saw again the children of whom she was so fond and proud. A little change was made in the routine of their lives by the accession of their father to the

dukedom of Gotha: after which event their time was divided regularly between the two dukedoms, and they spent certain seasons of the year at Coburg or the Rosenau, and other seasons at Gotha and Reinhardtbrunn, another ducal residence, which rivalled the Rosenau in the beauty of its surrounding landscape. The young Princes were said to have gone through the usual diseases of childhood, but Prince Albert had these so slightly that in after years it was held doubtful whether he had had them at all.

In a letter from Count Arthur Mensdorff—Prince Albert's cousin—to the Queen, and in a Memorandum drawn up by his tutor, Herr Florschütz, we find many interesting particulars of these boyish days. The Prince's disposition was usually mild and benevolent, but his anger was soon roused by anything mean or unjust. In playing at soldiers he did not like any stratagem; but fair, straightforward attack and defence had to be the rule if he bore part in the game. One day, when he was at play with several other boys at the Rosenau, it was allotted to some of them to storm an old ruined tower on the side of the castle, which the others were to defend; and one of the party suggested that there was an aperture at the back by which entrance could easily be obtained, and the fort captured. But Prince Albert affirmed that "this would be most unbecoming in a Saxon knight, who should always attack the enemy in front."

As he grew old enough for such pursuits, he became fond of fishing and shooting, but was restrained by his

tenderness of heart from indulging in these sports to any great extent; for "a wounded animal always excited his warmest compassion." The same kind-heartedness held him in check when he was tempted to give free play to his natural vein of humour. He had a strong sense of the ludicrous, great aptitude of imitation, and much love of harmless "quizzing;" but he quelled this tendency when he saw it was likely to give pain; and when he did indulge it, he took care not to be severe or ill-natured in his witticisms. An illustration of the innocent jokes which he allowed himself in the days of his youth may be found in the following amusing incident, which occurred a few years later on, and is thus recorded by his cousin, Count Arthur Mensdorff:

"In 1839, when I was serving in the Austrian Lancers, we met at Töplitz, and from thence drove together to Carlsbad, to see uncle Ernest. Eôs"—a favourite black greyhound—"was in the carriage. . . . We were at that moment approaching the station where we were to change horses. He asked me the name of the place, which I told him was Buchau, a village known all round as a sort of *Krähwinkel*, famous for all sorts of ludicrous stories about the inhabitants. We drove into the place, the postilion blowing his horn and cracking his whip. Albert, seeing a large crowd assembled round the post-house, said to me, 'Quick, stoop down in the carriage, and we will make Eôs look out of the window, and all the people will wonder at the funny Prince.' We did so, and the people had to satisfy their curiosity with Eôs. The

horses were soon changed, and we drove off, laughing heartily at our little joke."

Prince Albert's letters to his father, when he was in his twelfth year, show much affection for him, thorough love for home and all its innocent pursuits and gatherings, and anxious desire to improve himself and make the most of the sowing time of youth. "We have," he writes to the Duke, "plenty of time to work both in the house and in the garden, and employ it well in working hard to become good and useful men, and to give you pleasure." And this, though it might in ordinary cases be taken simply as a dutiful expression from an affectionate son, liable to be blotted out and forgotten at the first call of pleasure or boyish indolence, was the prophecy and proved to be the rule of his whole life,—“working hard,” and becoming a “good and useful” man.

In August, 1831, Prince Albert's mother died, after a long and painful illness, at St. Wendel, in her thirty-second year. "The Prince," writes Her Majesty, "never forgot her, and spoke with much tenderness and sorrow of his poor mother, and was deeply affected in reading, after his marriage, the accounts of her sad and painful illness. One of the first gifts he made to the Queen was a pin he had received from her when a little child. Princess Louise (the Prince's fourth daughter, and named after her grandmother) is said to be like her in face . . . The Duchess Louise was the last descendant of the family. Many years later, her earthly remains were brought to Coburg, and she now reposes next the Duke and his

second wife in the fine family mausoleum at Coburg, —only completed in the year 1860,—where the Queen herself placed a wreath of flowers on her tomb in the autumn of that year."

Her death was followed by that of Prince Albert's grandmother, the Duchess Dowager of Coburg, who had ever manifested the most devoted love to the two little Princes, and expressed the highest aspirations for their future career; one of her special longings being that her beloved grandchild Albert should one day marry the little English Princess, his cousin Victoria, whom she delighted to call "the Flower of May," she having been born in that auspicious month.

In the same year Albert's uncle Leopold was chosen to be King of the new State of Belgium; and in the following summer the young Princes accompanied their father on a visit to him at Brussels. The grand old buildings and the choice art treasures of that famous city made a deep impression on Prince Albert, and served as a stimulus to his natural love for artistic study and practice. On their way home the boys spent a few weeks at Mayence with their aunt and cousins, and attended the military school for swimming; in which useful accomplishment they acquired such proficiency before they left as to be able to swim down the Rhine from the bridge of Mayence to Biberich—three miles.

Of Prince Albert's habits at this interesting period of his life, when his character was in course of formation, we learn much from the valuable Memorandum which his tutor, Herr Florschütz, drew up in after

years. Up to his tenth year, he usually rose between six and seven in summer, and between seven and eight in winter. He breakfasted with his father between nine and ten; and this meal, from early spring to the fall of the year, was generally dispatched in the open air, in various places, seldom the same two days following. Little of the forenoon was left for study or other occupation, and it is a wonder that the boys retained their love for learning, and did not acquire the uneasy passion for roaming which seems to have characterized their father. To dinner Prince Albert sat down, with his brother and tutor only, at one o'clock; and when the Duke's dinner was over, he had to appear before the company, and afterwards paid a visit to one of his grandmothers, the Dowager Duchess Augusta; the other, the Duchess Caroline of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg, having been duly visited in the morning of each day. At seven he supped, and retired to rest as soon as possible, being totally unable to keep awake after that final meal. In this routine of physical life some innovations were made when the Prince completed his eleventh year; after which date he dined with the Duke at three, and attended the evening parties at Court.

His good tutor seems to have exercised a wise discretion in the mode in which he administered instruction, regulating its quantity according to the advancing strength of the willing little learner. When first he had charge of the tiny Albert, the chief occupation of Herr Florschütz was, to promote play and exercise in the open air, and to tell stories or explain

pictures to the young Prince. At six years of age his regular lessons commenced, but these at first occupied only one hour a day; then, from his seventh to his ninth year, three hours,—one before breakfast, one after, and a third in the afternoon. Later on, the time of instruction was extended to four hours, and ultimately to five; but this did not include his own special studies and occupations or his self-imposed tasks.

A good idea of the earnest bent of the Prince's mind, and of his strong purpose of improvement, may be formed from the "Programme of Studies" which he drew up for himself in his fourteenth year, and which maps out plenty of occupation for the working hours of every day. Thus, Monday was parcelled out as follows: 6 to 7, Translations from the French; 7 to 8, Repetition and Preparation in History; 8 to 9, Modern History; 10 to 11, Ovid; 11 to 12, English; 12 to 1, Mathematics; 6 to 7, French; 7 to 8, Exercises in Latin composition. On Tuesday the "Programme" gives: Exercises in Music; Preparation in Religion; Religious Instruction; Ovid; Logic; Geography; English Exercises; Written Translation of Sallust. Wednesday: Reading; Riding; Exercises in German composition; Music; English; French; Drawing; Mathematics. And so on through the week; special hours being allotted on Saturday to Correspondence, the weekly claims of which pleasant occupation were to be settled early in the morning and late at night.

We learn also from Herr Florschütz that in early youth Prince Albert was very shy; disliked the visits

of strangers, and on their approach would run to the farthest corner of the room, cover his face with his hands, and pertinaciously decline to look up or speak; the scene usually ending in a violent fit of screaming. To those plebeians who have known the misery of suffering from shyness which could not be controlled, but had to be grown out of, there will be some comfort in the knowledge that even a Prince—and an exceptionally perfect Prince, too—was subject to this painful besetment in his early days; and that his tutor's efforts and his own struggles against it were for a long time unable to conquer it—if, indeed, it was ever completely overcome.

“On one occasion,” writes Florschütz, “at a child's fancy ball given by the Duchess, Prince Albert, then in his fifth year, was brought down, and a little girl was selected as his partner; but when it came to his turn to move on, after the other dancers, nothing could induce him to stir, and his loud screams were heard echoing through the rooms. The Duchess, thus *agreeably* surprised, exclaimed, ‘This comes of his *good* education.’

“The Duke once undertook to punish the Prince for his supposed obstinacy. When the screams were next heard, therefore, the Duke, sending me out with the Hereditary Prince, resolved to try whether a small cane would not succeed in pacifying the ‘little obstinate.’ On our return, however, Prince Albert was still crying, and the Duke, who had not had the heart to administer the punishment he intended, was glad to be relieved from his self-imposed task.”

As he advanced in boyhood, cheerfulness and amiability became his eminent characteristics; accompanied, however, with a strong will, which sometimes resorted to compulsion with his more pliant elder brother, when compliance was not readily yielded. A fair amount of this strength of will, and steadiness of purpose, abode with him through life; and, being happily founded on a basis of calm and earnest thought, formed an important element in building up his fine manly character.

Another characteristic was his fondness for fun and practical jokes, to which we have already alluded, and which is sometimes, as in his case, the accompaniment of grave demeanour and high aims. But let not our young friends take this as a charter for the performance of absurd and annoying tricks, or suppose that such practices prove the existence of great genius or good disposition. On the contrary, they are too often the outcome of stupid heads and spiteful hearts, and are not worthy of imitation. But in Prince Albert's case his amusing contrivances and surprises proved to be only the overflowing of a studious, serious, yet gay and cheerful spirit, which loved work, and loved play also, in its season.

His tutor informs us that "the joke was not always on his side. The Princess Caroline of Reuss Ebersdorff, a clever, witty person, at that time resident at Coburg, and very fond of the young Prince, whom she took under her special protection, resolved to revenge herself for some trick he had played her. For this purpose she took advantage of an aversion he had

formed, under the following circumstances, for frogs. He was always fond of natural history, and lost no opportunity of collecting specimens, showing no timidity, even as a boy, in his pursuit and seizure of animals of all sorts. One evening, while tea was going on in the garden at Oeslau, Prince Albert occupied himself as usual in searching the hedges and path-sides for objects of interest to him, and hit upon a large and very pretty green frog. Seizing it in both hands, he ran with his treasure to the tea-table. To his astonishment he was received by the ladies with a general cry of horror; and their fright extending to himself, he threw down the frog in a panic, and from that time forward conceived the most unconquerable aversion for every animal of the kind." ("Particularly toads," notes the Queen.) "Princess Caroline, knowing this, took advantage of it to retaliate on the Prince for the many little tricks with which he loved to torment her. Amongst other tricks he had played upon her, he had one evening, during a party at the palace, filled the pockets of the cloak left by the Princess in the cloak-room with soft cheese; and helping assiduously to cloak her at the conclusion of the evening, he was delighted at the horror with which she threw the cloak away and turned upon himself as the perpetrator of the joke. For this the Princess took ample revenge, by collecting a basketful of frogs at the Rosenau, and having them placed unobserved in his bed, to the destruction of his night's rest."

We must not forget to mention, as characteristic of

him from his early youth, his eagerness to help others and to do good ; as well as his gratitude for any kindness shown to himself, and his lasting remembrance of it. And these grateful feelings were fitly accompanied by that forgiving spirit which distinguished him in his riper years, and which could not be absent from the composition of a truly benevolent heart. Though his health was generally good, he was subject to frequent attacks of croup and to various febrile affections. But these did not sour his temper, or render him troublesome to his attendants. On the contrary, his tutor records that "at such times the characteristic qualities of H.R.H.'s mind displayed themselves very remarkably. I shall never forget the gentle goodness, the affectionate patience he showed when suffering under slight feverish attacks. His heart seemed then to open to the whole world. He would form the most noble projects for execution after his recovery ; and though apparently not satisfied with himself, he displayed a temper and disposition which I may characterize as being, in thought and in deed, perfectly angelic. I cannot recall these recollections, even now, without the deepest emotion."

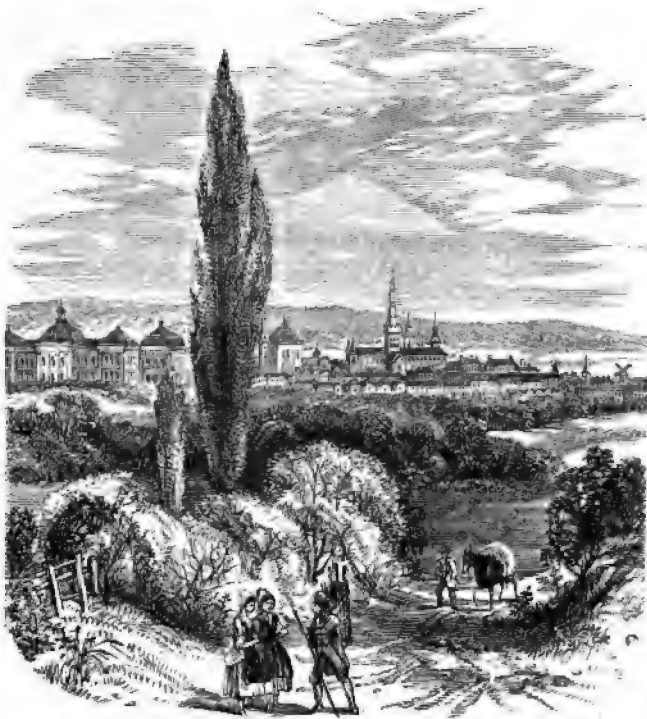
When only six years old, he was rendered supremely happy by being allowed to make a collection for a poor man, whose cottage, at Wolfsbach, a village near the Rosenau, had been burnt to the ground before the little Prince's eyes ; and he did not rest till the necessary funds for rebuilding it had been gathered in.

YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD.

1832—1839.

WHO makes by force his merit known
And lives to clutch the golden keys,
To mould a mighty State's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne ;
And moving up from high to higher,
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire ;
Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
When all his active powers are still,
A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream,
The limit of his narrower fate,
While yet beside its vocal springs
He played at counsellors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate.

TENNYSON.



(The University of Bonn.)

CHAPTER II.

YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD.

1832-1839.

COMBINED with the study of books was the fascinating study of nature, of which Prince Albert was an ardent lover. The Rosenau, the place

of his birth, and of many happy sojourns in his youth, is situated in a charming district, four miles from Coburg, in the midst of a landscape diversified by hill and wood and stream, and which to the eye of the English traveller seems to be marked with the best features of his own beautiful country. From this favourite centre the Prince, with his brother Ernest as his companion, would thread the lovely precincts of the Thüringerwald in various directions, and gaze with rapt enthusiasm on the glorious panorama which burst upon him on attaining the higher points. Here he imbibed that passionate love for the scenery of his old home which led him, in after years, to try to reproduce some of its peculiar beauties at Osborne and Balmoral, and to copy the picturesqueness of its architecture in the cottages which he built on the royal estates. It was fortunate that he took hearty delight in out-door exercise and sports; for these served to counterbalance the ill effects which too much study and confinement would have wrought in his highly-sensitive system, and to build up both body and mind in the robustness of a healthy activity.

At the Rosenau the boys made a little garden of *their own*—there is a world of pleasure in that phrase, to gentle and simple,—and they adorned their small summer-house just as their whims and fancies prompted them. And now, thanks to the loving care of the Queen, both garden and summer-house are still kept exactly as the young Princes arranged and left them.

Another favourite spot was Reinhardttsbrunn, about eight miles from Gotha; a seat which, though not so

dear to the hearts of the two brothers as the Rosenau, is perhaps even more charmingly situated; nestling close under the highest of the finely-wooded hills of that neighbourhood, surrounded by noble lime-trees and pleasant pine-woods, and in the heart of a chain of romantic glens and of wild scenery in which rock and forest are grandly combined. We may well believe that the brothers were never tired of exploring the recesses of these lovely valleys; and that, in after years, when heavily burdened with cares of State, they often looked back to the healthy, happy days which they spent in long excursions on foot through this charming district.

The years 1833 and 1834 were passed in the usual alternation between Coburg and Gotha and their respective surroundings. In 1835 an interesting era in the lives of both Princes was marked by the ceremony of their Confirmation, and their public profession of faith, which took place in the Schloss at Coburg. Though Prince Albert was a little under the usual age, it was kindly and properly arranged that in this, "the first important step in their young lives," the tenderly-attached brothers should not be separated. The ceremony occupied two days: the first, April 11th, being devoted to the public examination of the Princes; and the second, Palm Sunday, to their solemn Confirmation, according to the rites of the Lutheran Church. On both days the brothers bore themselves with admirable seriousness and deep feeling. Their devout demeanour, and their frank and decisive answers to the questions propounded as to their views and

faith, made lasting impression on the crowded congregation and the distinguished throng of relatives who were witnesses of the scene.

"The questions put by the examiner," says an interesting account published at the time, "were not such as to be met by a simple Yes or No. They were carefully considered, in order to give the audience a clear insight into the views and feelings of the young Princes. One of the most touching moments was when the examiner asked the Hereditary Prince whether he intended steadfastly to hold to the Evangelical Church; and the Prince answered not only 'Yes,' but added in a clear and decided tone: 'I and my brother are firmly resolved ever to remain faithful to the acknowledged truth.' All present were deeply moved at these words, especially as they proved how sincerely he associated his brother with himself in the inmost folds of his heart. The examination, which touched on all the most important articles of the faith, having lasted for an hour, was followed by some concluding remarks of the examiner, and by a short prayer; the second verse of the above-mentioned hymn,"—"Come, Holy Ghost, etc."—"was then sung, the blessing pronounced, and the service brought to a conclusion by the singing of the third verse. The Princes stepped down from the altar, and were fondly embraced by their father and by their venerable grandmother.

"On the following day, Palm Sunday, the Confirmation of the Princes took place in the chapel of the Castle. The service commenced with a chorus accom-

panied by the organ. A hymn followed ; after which the act of Confirmation was solemnly performed by the first chaplain of the Court, the Superintendent General, Dr. Genzler of Coburg. The Princes pronounced the Creed with firm and audible voice, and, kneeling before the altar, received the blessing. A short hymn having been sung, Dr. Genzler preached the sermon and read the Confession and the prayer of consecration. The Holy Communion was then received by the Duke, the Duchess Dowager, the Princes, a considerable number of Government officers, and many inhabitants of Coburg. The whole service was performed by Dr. Genzler in the most solemn manner, and produced in all present the feeling of humility and thankfulness towards God."

This open profession of belief, this confirmation in good principles, was with Prince Albert no formal service, no hereditary ceremony, but a real, heart-felt devotion of himself to the truth, in that Protestant aspect of it for which his ancestors had contended and suffered. Throughout his subsequent life he gave ample evidence that the religion which he had so publicly confessed in the Schloss at Coburg was the guiding star of his course, the harbinger of hope both for this world and for the next.

After the Confirmation, the young Princes paid a visit of congratulation to their great-grandfather the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, on the fiftieth anniversary of his accession. Then, after joining their father at Berlin for a few days, they set out by themselves on a tour, which embraced Dresden, Prague,

Vienna, Pesth, and Ofen ; meeting everywhere with great kindness, and leaving the most favourable impressions at every Court which they visited.

The year 1836 was specially marked as an era in Prince Albert's life, being the time of his first visit to England, and of his first acquaintance with the fair cousin who was soon to be Queen of England, and whom he was ere long to call by a dearer name still. With his father and brother he went down the Rhine to Rotterdam by steamboat, and crossed thence direct to London. In writing to his stepmother from the English capital, he says : " I would have answered you sooner if I had not been suffering from a bilious fever. The climate of this country, the different way of living, and the late hours, do not agree with me. I am now, however, fairly upon my legs again. . . . Dear Aunt " —the Duchess of Kent—" is very kind to us, and does everything she can to please us ; and our cousin also is very amiable." Such is the first hint in his letters of the cousinly attachment which was to ripen into life-long love, and to be crowned with happy marriage. The Princess Victoria was then just seventeen, and Prince Albert three months under that age.

After leaving England, and staying a short time at Paris, the two brothers went to Brussels, where they resided for the next ten months, under the care of Baron Wiechmann, a retired officer of the English German legion, diligently preparing themselves, chiefly by the study of modern languages, history, and science, for their removal to the University of Bonn, an event which was to take place early in the follow-

ing year. "We live," writes Prince Albert in June, 1836, "in a small but very pretty house, with a little garden in front; and though in the middle of a large town, we are perfectly shut out from the noise of the streets. The masters selected for us are said to be excellent, so that everything is favourable to our studies, and I trust there will be no lack of application on our part."

Amongst those who here added to his stock of knowledge was M. Quetelet, the celebrated mathematician and statist, whose teaching influenced the Prince's mind considerably, and did much to prepare him for the part he had afterwards to take in public affairs. The illustrious pupil was not ungrateful, but in after years proclaimed with pleasure the advantage he had derived from M. Quetelet's society and instruction. So earnestly did Prince Albert apply himself to his important studies, that, strong home-lover though he was, he thought it best not to return to Coburg to spend the Christmas holidays, and accordingly kept steadily on at his work at Brussels; urged along by that thirst for knowledge which is generally the precursor of great distinction in the world of mind. "We should be so glad," he writes to the Duke his father, "to accept your invitation to go to Coburg for a few days, and to spend Christmas there; but if we are to profit by our stay here, I am afraid we must deny ourselves that pleasure. Such an expedition would require five or six weeks, and our course of study would be quite disturbed by such an interruption."

The year 1837 brought with it the entrance upon a new sphere of life. In April the young Princes left Brussels for Bonn, where they were to remain for the next year and a half, excepting the usual vacations. This fine old city, planted on the left bank of the Rhine, in Rhenish Prussia, is specially famous, not only as the birthplace of Beethoven, but for its University, which was founded so lately as the year 1818, and holds its seat in the ancient palace of the Electors of Cologne, where, in lecture-halls, library, museums, and by the aid of distinguished professors, it deals out learning to some seven hundred students. Here the two brothers were pleasantly situated for pursuing their studies, entering the University as "students of law," and devoting themselves diligently to classics, mathematics, philosophy, jurisprudence, history, and statistics. English they had to some extent acquired at Brussels. Time was also found for private instruction in music and drawing,—arts of which Prince Albert was passionately fond, especially the former one. He had already shown considerable talent as a musical composer; and, while at Bonn, he executed a painting, the "Savoyard Minstrel Boy," which is now in Her Majesty's collection. Herr Florschütz, who was still their "guide, philosopher, and friend," and with whom they resided, says that Prince Albert "maintained the early promise of his youth by the eagerness with which he applied himself to his work, and by the rapid progress which he made, especially in the natural sciences, in political economy, and in philosophy." We may fairly suppose that the neigh-

bourhood of the Rhine, with its romantic scenery and wealth of tradition, afforded him much delight in his hours of relaxation; and also that in the depths of his heart he cherished the image of his fair cousin of England, and found in the remembrance of his visit an additional stimulus to exertion and improvement.

Amongst the Prince's instructors at Bonn we find the illustrious names of Bethman-Hollweg, Schlegel, Fichte, Perthès, etc.; and one of his fellow-students, Prince William of Löwenstein, tells us that "amongst all the young men at the University, Prince Albert was distinguished by his knowledge, his diligence, and his amiable bearing in society. He liked above all things to discuss questions of public law and metaphysics, and constantly, during our many walks, juridical principles or philosophical doctrines were thoroughly discussed." But these grave studies, and this earnest liking for pursuits which are sometimes classed as "heavy" and "dull" by those who are themselves entitled to those epithets, did not at all interfere with the play of that humour, nor blunt that keen sense of the ridiculous, which were amongst the Prince's characteristics, and for which some of the Bonnites furnished him with choice material. So amongst his fellow-students he was famous alike for his devotion to the highest and deepest forms of knowledge, and for his amusing caricatures, exquisite mimicry, and fine sense of the ridiculous. As he "excelled most of his contemporaries in the use of intellectual weapons, in the art of convincing, in strictly logical argument, so," Prince Löwenstein

assures us, "he was distinguished also in all kinds of bodily exercise. In fencing and the practice of the broadsword he was very skilful;" and once in a fencing match carried off the prize from all his competitors.

This year (1837) was specially memorable in the Prince's life as that in which his cousin the Princess Victoria ascended the throne of Great Britain, on the death of her uncle, William IV., which took place on June 20th. On hearing of this event Prince Albert addressed to the youthful Queen a few lines—his first English letter—presenting to his "dearest cousin" his "sincerest felicitations on that great change" which had taken place in her life. "Now you are Queen," he writes, "of the mightiest land of Europe, in your hand lies the happiness of millions. May Heaven assist you and strengthen you with its strength in that high but difficult task! I hope that your reign may be long, happy, and glorious; and that your efforts may be rewarded by the thankfulness and love of your subjects." He then very naturally prays Her Majesty to "think likewise sometimes of" her "cousins in Bonn, and to continue to them that kindness" she had "favoured them with till now;" and concludes by signing himself, "Your Majesty's most obedient and faithful servant, ALBERT."

Already, though the new Queen of England was but eighteen, and Prince Albert a little below that age, gossip, with its ever-busy tongue, had set afloat a rumour of a contemplated marriage between the two cousins. So their sage uncle Leopold, King of the

Belgians, while writing to his younger nephew a great deal about England, the intrigues and cabals of the great political parties, and all the "inexplicable" stir that was going on, strongly advised him and his brother to make a tour through Switzerland and the North of Italy. The King, no doubt, was sincerely desirous that the rumour should not prove a baseless one; for he was the principal promoter of the match: but he was wishful that public attention should be drawn away from the Princes, and that Prince Albert's future should cease to be the subject of untimely discussion.

Accordingly the brothers, at the end of August, started on their journey, and went by way of Andernach, Coblenz, Mannheim, Baden-Baden, and Kenzingen to Basel; thence, ascending the Jura by Münsterthal, they reached Montiers, Biel, and Elfenau, near Berne. From Elfenau, where they stayed a few days with their aunt, the Grand Duchess Anne, they made excursions to the most romantic scenery of Switzerland; ascending the Righi on foot, and marvelling at the glorious sunrise witnessed from its top; crossing the dangerous Mayenwand, and gladly gaining the Grimsel Hospice; tugging up to the summit of the Faulhorn, and there being rewarded by a magnificent sunset and an equally grand sunrise; enjoying a day or two's sight-seeing at Geneva, and accomplishing a partial ascent of Mont Blanc. Finally they crossed the Simplon into Italy; visited the Italian lakes, Milan, etc., and arrived at Venice on the 12th of October.

It was a tour calculated not only to strengthen the physical powers, the thews and sinews of the young Prince, but to bring into healthful play his highly-trained mental faculties, and afford him the highest enjoyment as an intense lover of the beauties of landscape and the treasures of art. "What thanks I owe you, dear papa," he writes, "for having allowed us to make such a beautiful tour! I am still quite intoxicated by all I have seen in so short a time. . . . Milan, and, still more, heavenly Venice, contain treasures of art that astonish me."

In the midst of the excitement of travel in such exquisite scenes, he did not forget his young cousin in England—who felt for a time forlorn upon the throne she had been so early called to occupy,—but sent her a small album, in which were placed views and other memorials of the places he had visited, with the dates of his visits. We are not surprised to learn that "this album the Queen now considers one of her greatest treasures, and never goes anywhere without it;" token as it was of affection and remembrance before any love-making had begun between the illustrious pair.

The Princes returned home to the Rosenau through the Tyrol and by way of Munich; having met with no mishaps, with the slight exception of being made prisoners at the top of Strasburg cathedral, through the tower-door being slammed to with the wind. Fortunately other sight-seers arrived, the door was opened, and they were released. After a few days spent at the Rosenau, they were to be found once

more pursuing their studies at Bonn with redoubled zest and energy.

Christmas they were to have spent with King Leopold at Brussels; but, before that joyous season arrived, Prince Albert, when practising horsemanship in the riding-school, received a severe injury to his knee, which was jammed between his horse and the wall, in consequence of the animal refusing to take a leap. So the projected visit had to be given up for a month or two: but when it took place the Prince returned to Bonn with light thrown upon his future career, and with some inkling as to the young Queen's thoughts with reference to marriage; of which more hereafter.

In June, 1838, the Duke of Coburg went over to England to attend the coronation of Queen Victoria; who graciously conferred the Order of the Garter on her future father-in-law.

Soon approached the period at which a separation was to take place between the two brothers, who were fondly attached to each other, and whose lives hitherto had run in the same pleasant groove. Their University career had now closed; and Prince Ernest was to go to Dresden to enter the service of Saxony, while Prince Albert was to set out for Italy, and to spend the winter there. The interval between the end of their educational course and the beginning of their public career was spent at their old and much-loved home at Coburg; and was marked by the catastrophe of a fire, which, but for the courage and coolness of the two Princes, would have demolished the ancestral seat.

"I learned from your dear letter to Ernest," writes Prince Albert to his grandmother, "that you are better, and that you have moved into your pretty winter residence in all its new splendour. How perishable such splendour is we felt seriously yesterday, when, if God had not held His protecting hand over us, the whole palace of Coburg might have become a prey to the flames, nor we ourselves able in any way to escape. A fire is lit in our rooms every morning, lest we should find them cold when we come to town occasionally in the afternoon. It happened the day before yesterday that we stayed in the town after the play, in order not to catch cold driving back to the Rosenau. The next morning I was awoke by an unpleasant smell. I sprang out of bed to see whether the register had not been forgotten to be opened in one of the stoves. The smoke met me thicker and thicker, but I could not discover anything. In the fourth room I was met by the flames darting towards me: it was all on fire. I called out 'Fire! fire!' when Ernest and Carl came from their rooms to my assistance. No living soul was in this wing of the palace except us three; it was also so early that nobody was astir in the neighbourhood. You can fancy our alarm. We did not take long to consider, but closed all the doors and shut ourselves up with the fire. There were only two jugs with water, and a jug of camomile tea, at our command, of which we made the most. Ernest took my cloak and his own and threw them upon the flames, while I dragged all my bedding there, and pressed the mattresses and

large counterpanes against the burning wall. Carl lifted a marble table with incredible strength, and threw it against the bookcase enveloped in flames, causing it to fall down. Having thus subdued the fire, we could think of calling for more help. Ernest ran, just as he got out of bed, downstairs to the sentry, who gave the alarm, whilst I and Carl were still working upstairs. The heat and smoke were so powerful that all the windows had fallen out; even the glasses of the framed pictures were cracked, and the pictures shrivelled in, and the paint of the doors is quite charred. Help now came in haste from all sides: a number of workmen brought water up and extinguished the smouldering fire. A bookstand with many books and all our prints, two chairs, a table, a looking-glass, etc., have been burnt. There is no other harm done, but that Carl and I have burnt the soles of our feet as we got barefooted into the cinders.

"The accident was caused by the ignorance of a stoker who had heated a stove that was not meant to be used, and on which books and prints were lying, and against which a quantity of maps were standing. The only picture that was not injured is the one of the fire at the palace of Gotha."

This interesting narrative was an unusually long one to proceed from the Prince's pen. His letters and memoranda at this period of his life were brief and to the point; and probably he would then have utterly scouted the idea that he could ever be induced to write those lengthy papers which were afterwards called forth by the stirring influence of public events.

The time of severance drew rapidly on, and its approach was painfully anticipated by the brothers, who had never, as far back as they could recollect, spent a single day away from each other. "I cannot," writes Prince Albert, "bear to think of that moment." The first wrench asunder took place towards the end of November; Ernest departing for Dresden, and Albert accompanying him a certain distance on the journey, and then returning to Coburg to realize how great was his loneliness now that the companionship of his early days was broken by distance. He endeavoured to soothe the pains of absence by frequent correspondence. "Now Ernest," he tells his grandmother, "has slept through his first night at Dresden. This day will also bring to him the feeling that something is wanting. I wrote to him to-day, and expect a few lines from him to-morrow or the day after, which I will send to you at once if you like it. If I have not written to you for some time, it was because during the last days we really had so much to talk and to care about. I am sure you will not be angry with me. I must now give up the custom of saying *we* and use the *I*, which sounds so egotistical and cold. In *we* everything sounded much softer, for the *we* expresses the harmony between different souls, the *I* rather the resistance of the individual against outward forces, though also confidence in its own strength. I am afraid of tiring you with my talk, and yet in this present silence it is a comfort to be able to talk."

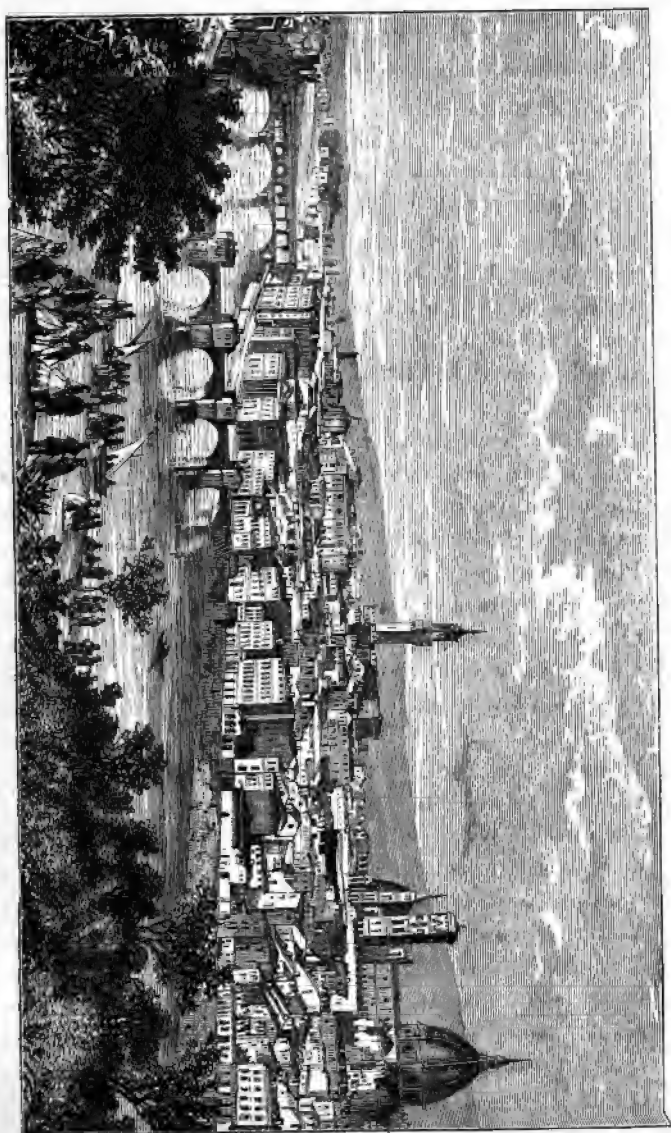
With the close of their University career the Princes left the tutelage of their excellent instructor, Herr

Florschütz, who had watched over them with almost parental care ever since they were respectively five and four years old. He had been their Mentor from the time when the little Albert had to be carried up and downstairs; and his loving watchfulness was rewarded by the deepest attachment to the end of his illustrious pupil's life. Baron Stockmar was now to be the Prince's companion on his tour in Italy; a man who was one of a thousand, and to whom in many of the difficulties of his future position the Prince was indebted for wise advice and staunch support. The Baron was a native of Coburg, and was attached to Prince Leopold—uncle of Prince Albert—when he came to England to wed the Princess Charlotte; so that his whole life may be said to have been devoted to the Coburg family.

At Florence Prince Albert was joined by Lieutenant (afterwards Major-General) Seymour, who had obtained leave of absence from his regiment—the 19th—in order to accompany the Prince on his travels. He describes the latter, whom he now saw for the first time, as being “slight in figure and rather tall, his face singularly handsome and intelligent, his features regular and delicate; his complexion, which, later, from exposure to an Italian sun, became brown, was then fair and clear. He had, in addition to these advantages, a great look of goodness and distinction, which, young as he was in years, impressed all who were fortunate enough to be thrown into his society.” Mr. Seymour also gives the following interesting details of the Prince's mode of life at Florence:

"The Prince was staying at the Casa Cerini, Via del Coromen. . . . He rose at six o'clock. After a light breakfast he studied Italian under a Signor Martini, read English with me for an hour, played on the organ or piano, composed, sung, till twelve o'clock, when he generally walked, visiting some gallery, or seeing some artist. He returned home at two to a simple dinner, which he hurried over as much as possible, giving as a reason that 'eating was a waste of time.' His drink was water. After dinner he again played and sang for an hour, when the carriage was announced, and he usually paid some visits. The visits over, the carriage was dismissed, and the great delight of the Prince was to take long walks in the beautiful country round Florence. This he appeared heartily to enjoy. 'Now I can breathe—now I am happy!' Such were his constant exclamations. He seldom returned home till seven o'clock, his hour for tea; and, if not going to the opera or an evening party, he joined in some interesting and often amusing conversation with Baron Stockmar, when the latter felt well enough to come to tea. At nine, or soon after, he was in bed and asleep: for he had been accustomed to such early hours in his own country that he had great difficulty in keeping himself awake when obliged to sit up late."

The Prince's æsthetic faculties were amply gratified by his stay amongst the treasures of art which are found at Florence, and the beautiful scenery which surrounds it. He left the Tuscan capital on March 12th, and arrived at Rome on the fifth day after,



Florence.

amid a storm of rain. Whether the heavy shower damped his enthusiasm we cannot say; but "the Eternal City" does not appear to have impressed him favourably. "But for some beautiful palaces, it might just as well be any town in Germany." However, he made the best of his time, rising at daybreak, writing letters, then visiting galleries and studios; partaking of a hurried dinner, again setting out on expeditions, and till sunset exploring the remains of old Rome.

In Easter week he was interested in what he saw at the head-quarters of Romanism; but states that the only ceremony which had not disappointed him, as being inferior to his anticipations, was that of the Pope's blessing the people. "It was really," he says, "a most imposing scene, though what followed was tedious and savoured strongly of idolatry." He had an interview with the old Pontiff, Gregory XVI., and conversed with him in Italian "on the influence the Egyptians had had on Greek art, and that again on Roman art. The Pope asserted that the Greeks had taken their models from the Etruscans. In spite of his infallibility I ventured to assert that they had derived their lessons in art from the Egyptians."

From Rome he passed to Naples; and, after visiting Vesuvius, Pæstum, Sorrento, Capri, etc., and revisiting Rome, took his way northward to Milan, where he was met by his father and his cousin Mensdorff, who accompanied him to the Lake of Como; crossing thence into Switzerland by the Simplon, and proceeding by the Lake of Geneva to Vevay; thence

to Geneva; and so home to Coburg, where the coming of age of his elder brother, the Hereditary Prince, was about to be celebrated with great ceremony and rejoicing.

This event took place on the 21st of June, 1839, and was of importance to Prince Albert not only as the twenty-first birthday of the brother to whom he was tenderly attached, but also as the day on which, by special act of the legislature, he himself was declared of age simultaneously with his brother, though he was not yet twenty. He was naturally much gratified by this proof of his father's affection and confidence; and was delighted that in this important step of their lives he and his brother had "still been allowed to go hand in hand." "I am now," he writes, "my own master, as I hope always to be, and under all circumstances:" a characteristic declaration, on which the Queen remarks, "How truly was this ever carried out!"

The Prince, with the true feeling of a man whose mind has been used to years of study and active thought, was almost ashamed of the comparative idleness of a life of travel, Court-visiting and sight-seeing, as consisting "chiefly in dawdling about and exchanging compliments." Still, he acknowledged that his Italian tour had been of great advantage to him; impressing him not so much by its particular incidents as by its general character; doubling his sphere of observation, and increasing his power to form a right judgment. He was anxious to regain the quiet of the Rosenau, there to pursue in peace the course

of study which he had mapped out in the English language and history; and he grudged the break made in it by having to accompany the Duke his father on a visit to Carlsbad; but he was able afterwards so far to carry his point as not to have to go to Reinhardtsbrunn, but to be left free for a short time of quiet and regular occupation.

BETROTHAL AND MARRIAGE.

1839—1840.

O HAPPY, not in aught that would divide,
But rather that which links thee with thy kind—
Most happy that, Heaven favouring, thou hast found
Of thy life's orb the absent hemisphere,
The fulness, and mysterious complement ;
Which finding not, earth's wealthiest, wisest, greatest,
Wander disconsolate, and reap no joy
From life defeated and half-unfulfilled,
While they who find, though poorest, are most rich.
O, well is thee, that in two commonest names,
Yet holiest, names first heard in Paradise,
That in the names of husband and of wife
The sum of thy pure happiness, and hers
Who has fulfilled thy life, is all contained.

TRENCH.



(Windsor Castle.)

CHAPTER III.

BETROTHAL AND MARRIAGE.

1839-1840.

NOW comes the crisis of Prince Albert's life. Shall the handsome youth from Coburg win the heart and hand of his fair cousin of England, and help her worthily to wield the sceptre of a great empire? or shall he spend his life in comparative obscurity, a younger member of a small though illustrious House? The latter course—though it would have grieved him

to find that he did not occupy the highest place in his queenly cousin's affections—would yet have yielded much quiet happiness, and given scope for a studious yet active life in perfect accordance with his frank and simple nature and habits; would have allowed the indulgence of his intense love for rural scenery and out-door pursuits, and kept him close within the charmed circle of the home of his childhood. We may well imagine that it was a time of anxiety for the young Prince; and that he looked wistfully forward to that second visit to England, which, he was determined, should decide his course once and for ever.

His grandmother, the Dowager Duchess of Coburg, had, from Prince Albert's earliest years, given frequent utterance to the hope that the two little cousins would be one day united in a happy marriage; and the Prince in after years was accustomed to tell how, when he was a small boy of three summers, his nurse was fond of telling him that he should marry his cousin Victoria; and he affirmed that "when he first thought of marrying at all, he always thought of her." This was, too, the cherished project of his uncle, the King of the Belgians, to whom the young Queen looked up with all a daughter's love and respect: for he had well supplied the place of the father whom she lost in her early infancy. Baron Stockmar, also, King Leopold's confidential companion and right-hand man, had formed the highest opinion of the young Prince, and expressed his strong conviction that "no one was so well qualified to make the Queen happy,

or fitly to sustain the arduous and difficult position of Prince Consort in England."

That Prince Albert was eminently qualified for such a position by temper, disposition, genius, accomplishments, and high principle, was evident to all who had the opportunity of watching and conversing with him. But no one, though looking at him with the eye of affectionate interest, could have told in his early manhood how perfectly he was adapted for the place assigned him by Providence, or could have foreseen how admirably he was to fulfil all its functions, sacrificing even his life to the calls of duty to his consort and his adopted country. Princes, bright, accomplished, noble-looking as he, have often proved to be anything but blessings to the lands over which they have presided. The step of advancement to a throne has often marked the very era of moral deterioration and lapse. But our Prince's course not only did not disappoint the fond anticipations of the friends who doted on him, but belied the ill-wishes of those who had other plans in view, or whose opinions were coloured by party prejudice.

The idea of his marriage with his cousin Victoria had been persistently discouraged by her royal uncle William IV., who was specially desirous of effecting an alliance between her and the late Prince Alexander of the Netherlands; and who, with this object in view, did everything he could to prevent the Duke of Coburg from visiting England with his two sons in 1836. That visit, however, in spite of all his efforts, took place: the Duke spent four pleasant weeks at

Kensington Palace, the residence of his sister, the Duchess of Kent, and the Princes had their first opportunity of enjoying the society of their young cousin her daughter. It is pleasant to note that the Queen was in after years assured by the amiable Queen Dowager Adelaide, that "if she had told the King," who was a very warm-hearted man, "that it was her own earnest wish to marry her cousin, and that her happiness depended on it, he would at once have given up his opposition to it, as he was very fond of, and always very kind to, his niece."

The Queen's impressions of that momentous visit are thus recorded in a memorandum by Her Majesty: "The Prince was at that time much shorter than his brother, already very handsome, but very stout, which he entirely grew out of afterwards. He was most amiable, natural, unaffected, and merry; full of interest in everything; playing on the piano with the Princess his cousin, drawing,—in short, constantly occupied. He always paid the greatest attention to all he saw, and the Queen remembers well how intently he listened to the sermon preached in St. Paul's, when he and his father and brother accompanied the Duchess of Kent and the Princess there, on the occasion of the service attended by the children of the different charity schools. It is indeed rare to see a Prince, not yet seventeen years of age, bestowing such earnest attention on a sermon."

The spirit in which Prince Albert entertained the matrimonial project, when propounded to him by his uncle Leopold, is well expressed by the latter in a

letter to Baron Stockmar written in March, 1838: "I have had a long conversation with Albert, and have put the whole case honestly and kindly before him. He looks at the question from its most elevated and honourable point of view. He considers that troubles are inseparable from all human positions, and that, therefore, if one must be subject to plagues and annoyances, it is better to be so for some great or worthy object than for trifles and miseries. I have told him that his great youth would make it necessary to postpone the marriage for a few years. . . . I found him very sensible on all these points. But one thing he observed with truth. 'I am ready,' he said, 'to submit to this delay, if I have only some certain assurance to go upon. But if, after waiting, perhaps, for three years, I should find that the Queen no longer desired the marriage, it would place me in a very ridiculous position, and would, to a certain extent, ruin all the prospects of my future life.'"

The Prince entertained a reasonable dislike to the proposal that a few years should elapse before the marriage should take place; for he felt strongly that if he waited till his twenty-second or twenty-third year it would be difficult for him to enter upon any new career, and that "his whole life would be *marred* if the Queen should change her mind." So far from there having been any likelihood of such a change in Her Majesty's feelings, she in after years repeatedly assured the Prince that she would never have married any one else; and after his early death, she expressed poignant regret that she had not kept up her corre-

spondence with her cousin after her accession, as she had done before it; and very naturally—under the pressure of her great grief—but very unnecessarily, blamed herself in these touching sentences: “Nor can the Queen now think without indignation against herself, of her wish to keep the Prince waiting for probably three or four years, at the risk of ruining all his prospects for life, until she might feel inclined to marry! And the Prince has since told her that he came over in 1839 with the intention of telling her, that if she could not then make up her mind, she must understand that he could not now wait for a decision, as he had done at a former period when this marriage was first talked about. The only excuse the Queen can make for herself is in the fact that the sudden change from the secluded life at Kensington to the independence of her position as Queen Regnant, at the age of eighteen, put all ideas of marriage out of her mind, which she now most bitterly repents. A worse school for a young girl, or one more detrimental to all natural feelings and affections, cannot well be imagined, than the position of a Queen at eighteen, without experience and without a husband to guide and support her. This the Queen can state from painful experience, and she thanks God that none of her dear daughters are exposed to such danger.”

Such regrets are very natural. At the same time, as the marriage took place some months before the Prince had completed his twenty-first year, it may fairly be accounted to have been a sufficiently early one.

The two brothers left Brussels on the 8th of October, 1839, and arrived at Windsor Castle on the evening of Thursday the 10th. They were the bearers of a note from King Leopold to his niece, in which he commended them to her *bienveillance*, and told her, "They are good and honest creatures, deserving your kindness, and not pedantic, but really sensible and trustworthy. I have told them that your great wish is that they should be quite *unbefangen* (at their ease) with you. I am sure that if you have anything to recommend to them they will be most happy to learn it from you."

From the Queen they met with the most hearty and affectionate reception. It was three years since their English relatives had seen them; and they were struck with the great improvement in their personal appearance. Both were tall and manly, but Prince Albert was strikingly handsome; his countenance was distinguished by special gentleness of expression, and his smile by peculiar sweetness. His clear blue eye and fine broad forehead seemed to be the index of deep thought and bright intelligence; and his whole presence and carriage charmed and impressed all observers.

The routine of their daily life in this Windsor visit threw the young Princes a good deal into the Queen's society. When she had breakfasted in her own room, they paid her a visit there; and at two o'clock had luncheon with her and the Duchess of Kent. In the afternoon the Queen, the Duchess, and the two Princes rode out, with Lord Melbourne and most of the ladies



(The Crimson Drawing-Room.)

and gentlemen in attendance. The day was usually wound up with a great dinner, sometimes followed by a stately dance.

Her Majesty was not long in making up her mind and forming her resolution on the subject on which her younger visitor was so anxious. Her possession of regal power had not been lengthy, but it was fully sufficient to convince her that, however grand it might be to sway the sceptre of a large kingdom, it was not good to stand alone on such a pinnacle of responsibility. On the 15th of October there was an important break in the royal routine of business and pleasure. When Prince Albert returned from an early hunting expedition with his brother, he was summoned, in accordance with an intimation given him on the previous day, to an interview with the Queen in her room, where he found her alone, and where Her Majesty was obliged, by her higher position, to take upon herself the delicate and embarrassing office of making an offer of marriage to the man whom she loved. Certainly a very awkward matter to be set forth by the hesitating lips of a gentle maiden of twenty summers; but we may be sure that every difficulty vanished as soon as the few words were spoken which indicated the direction in which her thoughts ran, and conveyed to the modest, handsome Prince the pleasing assurance of his fair cousin's love and confidence.

It was an announcement calculated to disturb the quiet demeanour of the gravest, most self-possessed man, changing into certainty hopes which had seemed

too daring to be realized. The Prince, with his bright intellect and great capacity for domestic enjoyment, however much he had longed for this declaration, was now, when it came, fairly bewildered with happiness. We are told that he received the Queen's offer "without hesitation, and with the warmest demonstration of kindness and affection." The next day he writes to the old friend of the House of Coburg, Baron Stockmar, the grand news. "I write to you," he says, "on one of the happiest days of my life, to give you the most welcome news possible. . . . Victoria is so good and kind to me that I am often at a loss to believe that such affection should be shown to me. I know the great interest you take in my happiness, and therefore pour out my heart to you."

The Queen also suffered—if *suffering* it can be called—from the same entrancing bewilderment. "This letter," she writes to her uncle Leopold on the same eventful day, "will, I am sure, give you pleasure, for you have always shown and taken so warm an interest in all that concerns me. My mind is quite made up, and I told Albert this morning of it. The warm affection he showed me on learning this gave me great pleasure. He seems perfection, and I think that I have the prospect of very great happiness before me. I love him *more* than I can say, and shall do everything in my power to render this sacrifice (for such in my opinion it is) as small as I can. He seems to have great tact, a very necessary thing in his position. These last few days have passed like a dream to me, and I am so much bewildered by it

all that I know hardly how to write; but I do feel very happy."

It is not often that the outside world can gain any details of that interesting period of the life of sovereigns and princes when courtship is carried on and marriage arrangements are made. In the case of Prince Albert, however, the Queen has graciously given to the public many little details which throw light on this important era in the two lives which were to be so happily united. The records of journals and letters show that the two lovers felt the "one touch of nature" which "makes kin" of high and low under like circumstances. For instance, the Queen has to attend a review on a bitter November day. "At ten minutes to twelve," she writes, "I set off in my Windsor uniform and cap, on my old charger 'Leopold,' with my beloved Albert, looking so handsome in his uniform, on my right. . . . It was piercingly cold, and I had my cape on, which dearest Albert settled comfortably for me."

What the principles and purposes were which animated the Prince in this new phase of life may be discerned in the following sentences extracted from one of his letters to Stockmar: "I have laid to heart your friendly and kind-hearted advice as to the true foundation on which my future happiness must rest, and it agrees entirely with the principles of action which I had already privately framed for myself. An individuality, a character, which shall win the respect, the love, and the confidence of the Queen and of the nation, must be the groundwork of my position. This

individuality gives security for the disposition which prompts the actions; and even should mistakes occur, they will be more easily pardoned on account of that personal character: while even the most noble and beautiful undertakings fail in procuring support to a man who is not capable of inspiring that confidence. If, therefore, I prove a 'noble' Prince in the true sense of the word, as you call upon me to be, wise and prudent conduct will become easier to me, and its results more rich in blessings. I will not let my courage fail. With firm resolution and true zeal on my part, I cannot fail to continue 'noble, manly, and princely' in all things. In what I may do, good advice is the first thing necessary; and *that* you can give better than any one, if you can only make up your mind to sacrifice your time to me for the first year of my existence here."

In November Prince Albert returned home; and in December official declaration of his intended marriage was made at Coburg, with public ceremony and festivities. "The joy of the people was so great," he writes, "that they went on firing in the streets with guns and pistols during the whole night, so that one might have imagined that a battle was taking place." But this rejoicing of the people that their favourite Prince had been chosen to be the consort of the illustrious sovereign of Great Britain was tempered with great lamentation when they came to think of the loss which they would sustain, and how much they would miss the bright, cheerful presence of him who had gone in and out amongst the burghers

and peasants of Coburg and Gotha from early childhood.

By his grandmother at Gotha the separation was looked forward to with painful feeling. "I am very much upset," writes the kind-hearted old lady. "The brilliant destiny awaiting our Albert cannot reconcile me to the thought that his country will lose him for ever! and, for myself, I lose my greatest happiness. But I think not of myself. The few years I may yet have to live will soon have passed away. May God protect dear Albert, and keep him in the same heavenly frame of mind! I hope the Queen will appreciate him. I have been much pleased that she has shown herself so kind towards me, especially as I am sure I owe it all to the affection of my Albert. And yet I *cannot* rejoice. May God spare our Ernest, at least, who will now be our only joy, and the only hope of the country!"

Quite as severely was the approaching loss felt in anticipation by Prince Albert's elder brother, his companion and intimate friend from childhood. In a letter which well deserves preservation amongst the best specimens of princely correspondence, and which does him great credit for its ardent affection and just appreciation of his brother's character, Prince Ernest writes thus to the Queen, under date of December 19th, 1839: "O, if you could only know the place you and Albert occupy in my heart! Albert is my second self, and my heart is one with his. Independently of his being my brother, I love and esteem him more than any one on earth. You will smile, perhaps,

at my speaking of him to you in such glowing terms; but I do so that you may feel still more how much you have gained in him.

"As yet you are chiefly taken with his manner, so youthfully innocent—his tranquillity—his clear and open mind. It is thus that he appears on first acquaintance. One reads less in his face of knowledge of men and experience, and why? It is because he is pure before the world and before his own conscience. Not as though he did not know what sin was—the earthly temptations—the weakness of man. No; but because he knew, and still knows, how to struggle against them, supported by the incomparable superiority and firmness of his character!

"From our earliest years we have been surrounded by difficult circumstances, of which we were perfectly conscious; and, perhaps more than most people, we have been accustomed to see men in the most opposite positions that human life can offer. Albert never knew what it was to hesitate. Guided by his own clear sense, he always walked calmly and steadily in the right path. In the greatest difficulties that may meet you in your eventful life, you may repose the most entire confidence in him. And then only will you feel how great a treasure you possess in him.

"He has, besides, all other qualities necessary to make a good husband. Your life cannot fail to be a happy one."

Meanwhile, Prince Albert had become aware that his path, bright as it seemed with flowers, was not to

be free from the thorns and briers which beset the steps of high and low alike. Amongst his minor difficulties the formation of the staff of his future household was a matter which gave him some little trouble. His own ideas on the subject were clear and sensible. He wished all the appointments to be made without regard to politics; and was anxious that the persons selected should be "either of high rank, or very rich, or very clever, or persons who have performed important services for England." Above all he desired that they should be well educated men, and of high character, and distinguished in their several positions, whether in the army, or the navy, or the scientific world. The selection actually made, however, does not appear to have reached the Prince's lofty standard; for the Queen states that the arrangements were not altogether such as they should have been, and that the Prince was a good deal annoyed about the matter.

Early in 1840, when the Bill for the Prince's naturalization came before the House of Lords, the Duke of Wellington, who belonged to the party not then in power, objected to a clause in it which gave the Prince precedence over every one but the Queen; and, in consequence of the Duke's opposition, the clause had to be abandoned, and the Prince could take his proper rank only by Her Majesty exercising her own prerogative in the matter.

A thorny discussion intruded into the consideration of the annual sum to be granted by Parliament to the Prince on his marriage. The amount proposed by

Lord John Russell, in the House of Commons, was £50,000, the identical sum which the nation had granted Queen Charlotte, Queen Caroline, and Queen Adelaide, for their respective privy purses. Mr. Joseph Hume, in perfect consistency with his constant advocacy of reduction of all public expenditure, proposed to reduce the sum to £21,000; but his motion was negatived by three hundred and five to thirty-eight. When, however, the eccentric Colonel Sibthorpe moved its reduction to £30,000, his amendment was supported by Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Goulburn, Sir James Graham, etc.; and, on a division, this sum was carried as the Prince's future allowance.

Such difficulties and discussions were a little discouraging to the Prince, who was unprepared for any indications of dislike or distrust on the part of the English people, and who had yet to learn that these were but party manifestations and manœuvres, and proceeded from no personal enmity. We may here anticipate by saying that his fine perception quickly divined the true state of matters; and where a dull, low-principled man would have trained himself for lifelong enmity, he rose superior to all personal considerations, and bore no malice to the renowned Duke and the great Sir Robert, but showed, in his subsequent intimate relations with them, his loyalty to the interests of his new country and his independence of party feeling.

The Queen, going in state to open Parliament on January 16th, 1840, was loudly cheered by the crowds which lined the route of the royal procession and

seemed animated with delight in expectation of the marriage being formally announced. Inside the House of Lords was a brilliant throng of fair women and distinguished men: but the Queen, though only in her twenty-first year, was self-possessed and perfectly equal to the occasion; and in clear, ringing tones she gave distinct utterance to the declaration of the important step to which she had made up her mind. "Since you were last assembled," she said, "I have declared my intention of allying myself in marriage with the Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. I humbly implore that the Divine blessing may prosper this union, and render it conducive to the interests of my people, as well as to my own domestic happiness; and it will be to me a source of the most lively satisfaction to find the resolution I have taken approved by my Parliament. The constant proofs which I have received of your attachment to my person and family persuade me that you will enable me to provide for such an establishment as may appear suitable to the rank of the Prince and the dignity of the Crown."

Unfortunately in drawing up this part of the Royal speech the Ministry had thoughtlessly omitted reference to the fact that the Prince was a Protestant. The Duke of Wellington therefore moved the insertion of the word "Protestant" in the Address in reply; an amendment which was very properly agreed to. As the Prince was himself a thorough Protestant, and was the representative of that branch of the Saxon royal family which had lost its birthright

through its adherence to the Protestant cause, and as the success of that cause in Germany was very greatly owing to the constancy of this Ernestine branch, it was, to say the least, imprudent of Lord Melbourne to omit mention of so vital a point in the Prince's qualifications. But he said truly, "All England knows he is a Protestant; the whole world knows he is a Protestant." And Lord Brougham argued that the word was superfluous, since the law would not permit that the Queen's husband should be anything else than a Protestant. "I may remark," observed the facetious lawyer, "that my noble friend" (Lord Melbourne) "was mistaken as to the law. There is no prohibition as to marriage with a Catholic. It is only attended with a penalty; and that penalty is *merely the forfeiture of the crown!*"

In this eventful January Lord Torrington and Colonel Grey came to Gotha, with three of the Queen's carriages, as an escort for the young bridegroom on his road to England, and as bearers of the Garter with which he was to be invested before he left his ancestral home. On January 23rd, accordingly, the grand Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, amid the roar of one hundred and one cannons, bound the Garter round the knee of his younger son; and the following days, though varied with festivities, were but a prolonged leave-taking, till the final day arrived when the journey to England had to be begun.

On Tuesday, January 28th, Prince Albert set forth

for England, leaving behind the old German land, the home of his forefathers, which he loved so well and which he was destined not to see again for four years. The departure from Gotha was a scene long to be remembered by those who witnessed it. All classes bore a sincere love to the Prince, and vied with each other in demonstrations of affection, crowding the streets, filling the windows, thronging the house-tops, waving hats and handkerchiefs, and straining their eyes for a last long look at the handsome, accomplished, tender-hearted friend who was leaving them so early in his bright career.

The carriages which conveyed the Duke and his sons, with their friends, stopped when they came opposite the residence of the poor old Dowager Duchess, and Prince Albert got out, with his father and brother, to bid her a last adieu. She was terribly distressed at losing her favourite grandson; and as the carriages drove off she came to the window, and, throwing out her arms, cried, in heartrending tones, "Albert! Albert!" and then was carried away by her attendants almost in a fainting condition.

At the frontier of the State an arch of green fir-trees had been erected, and a number of young girls, dressed in white and bedecked with roses and garlands, with a band of musicians and singers, were waiting to bid a final "God speed" to the young Prince. It was a gay, though winterly scene. The ground white with snow, and the bitter north-east wind, could not chill the enthusiasm of the warm-hearted Germans, who sang a pretty farewell hymn and breathed the best

wishes for their youthful chief as he crossed the Rubicon of his native land.

Here the last of the party which had preceded them on their way took leave of the Duke and his sons, who, with the English and German gentlemen in attendance upon them, forming a party of twelve, pushed on to Cassel, where they passed the night, after paying a visit to the Elector of Hesse. So they travelled steadily on to Deutz, where they had to cross the Rhine in boats, the bridge not having as yet been set up for the year. It was a cold and tedious passage across the classic stream, made the more dreary and unpleasant by the heavy rain. From Cologne they travelled on to Aix-la-Chapelle, where the Prince was met by the unpleasant news of the Parliamentary discussion on the grant to be made to him, and the reduction of the amount proposed. He began to fear that his intended marriage was disagreeable to the English people; and he doubtless felt a little depressed by the idea, till he stepped on British ground and became assured of the sincerity of the popular welcome.

At Liège the whole city turned out to receive the Prince and to do him honour, and their music of welcome lasted far into the night. Arriving at length at Brussels the Duke and his two sons spent several days in the society of their relative, the wise King Leopold, who treated them with the highest distinction. On February 5th they resumed their journey to England; going by rail as far as Ostend, and then pushing along the coast by Dunkirk and Gravelines to

Calais. The journey was devoid of special interest, except that at Dunkirk the Duke and his son Albert had a narrow escape from being driven into the ditch of the fortress, which would have afforded a very unbecoming bath for a budding bridegroom.

On Thursday, February 6th, the princely party crossed the Channel in the Dover steamer *Ariel*. Though the early morning had been fine, the weather changed before they left Calais, and the sea, being anything but a sycophant, became very rough. Almost everybody was sick and miserable. After a stormy passage of five hours and a half, Prince Albert, who was ill to the last moment, had to shake off the prostration resulting from sea-sickness, and to nerve himself for going up from below and bowing to the crowds of spectators as the vessel rolled in between the piers at Dover.

As the Prince landed, he was received with the utmost warmth of enthusiasm, and his progress next day to Canterbury was like a triumphal procession, every inhabitant turning out of village and hamlet and farmhouse and cottage to welcome him with hearty cheers. At the ancient city itself, he attended afternoon service in the Cathedral; and in the evening, when the place was illuminated, he delighted the vast crowds by appearing on the balcony of his hotel in answer to their salutes and calls.

From Canterbury the Prince sent on his greyhound Eôs in charge of his valet; and that evening Her Majesty hailed with pleasure the arrival of this favourite four-footed forerunner of her betrothed.

This intelligent and affectionate animal was jet black in colour, with the exception of a narrow white streak on the nose and a white foot. She died at Windsor four and a half years afterwards, and was buried on the top of the bank above the slopes, where a bronze medal of her marks the spot.

On Saturday the Prince left Canterbury for London, and experienced the same cordial reception all along the line to Buckingham Palace, where he arrived in the afternoon, and was received at the hall door by the Queen and her mother, attended by the whole household. Half-an-hour afterwards the oaths of naturalization were administered by the Lord Chancellor to the Prince, who then and there became a true Englishman by adoption. It was a memorable day to Her Majesty, who made a glowing record, in her Journal, of the great joy she felt at seeing the Prince again.

Next day Prince Albert presented to the Queen his wedding gift,—a beautiful sapphire and diamond brooch; and she, on her part, bestowed on him the star and badge of the Garter, and the Garter itself set in diamonds.

At length the wedding-day dawned,—February 10th, 1840. The Prince, ever mindful of his aged grandmother at Gotha, found time, even amid the excitement of that eventful morning, to write to her who loved him as her own soul. "In less than three hours," he said, "I shall stand before the altar with my dear bride! In these solemn moments I must once more ask your blessing, which I am well

assured I shall receive, and which will be my safeguard and my future joy. I must end. God help me !”

The marriage took place at the Chapel Royal, St. James's ; and the service was read by the Archbishop of Canterbury with great propriety and feeling. When His Grace came to the words, “ Albert, wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony ? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honour, and keep her in sickness and in health ; and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live ? ” — the Prince replied, in a firm tone, “ I will.” When the corresponding question was addressed to the Queen, Her Majesty, in like manner, answered with firm voice, clearly and audibly, “ I will.”

This was no idle ceremony ; these were no vain promises. How well they were kept in mind, how thoroughly they were carried out in every-day life, the records of the next twenty-one years, anxious but happy, were to show. Few sacred contracts were ever more religiously observed ; few unions have ever been so fitting, few matches so thoroughly good and so productive of lasting happiness. Well might the masses of London rejoice at the spectacle. Both bride and bridegroom were in the heyday of youth and beauty ; and as they left the chapel, her arm in his, and the anxious expression on her pale face replaced by the glowing lines of trustful happiness, it was felt by all observers that this was a sight which was pleasant and good to see. The spectacle in the

chapel was a very brilliant one ; the grand dresses of

“ Premier, prelate, potentate, and peer,”

and the lovely array of gaily-dressed ladies, forming a magnificent and highly-coloured picture. The bridegroom, as he walked up the aisle, carrying a book in his right hand, and bowing, now and again, to peer and peeress, was greatly admired ; his manly beauty and graceful demeanour winning the hearts of all beholders, who acknowledged him to be, as Scott phrases it,

“ Shaped in proportion fair,
[Blue] was his eagle eye,
And auburn of the darkest dye
His short moustache and hair.”

Who shall say what were the feelings of Prince Albert on this supreme day ? It was the first day of a new career, and was entered upon by him in that spirit of calm, steady devotion which was a distinguishing characteristic of his life. An ordinary man would have been intoxicated with his success in winning the hand not merely of a fair, sweet, highly-accomplished maiden, but of a great Monarch, the Queen of the foremost country of this wide earth. Prince Albert did not underrate his happiness : his keen perception of it served but to clench his firm resolve, by God's grace, to be equal to the position to which Providence had led him, and to perform his duty ever “ as in the great Taskmaster's eye,” or rather, as in the immediate presence of a guiding, loving Father.

The morning had been a true February one, dark and

dismal, with rain and fog : but not all its November-like attributes could keep the multitudes at home, or damp their loyal ardour ; and after the bridal procession returned to breakfast at Buckingham Palace, the sun broke forth in splendour, the mist cleared away, and the royal pair departed for Windsor in all the warmth and brightness of the proverbial "Queen's weather." At that ancient and loyal town their reception was, as the Queen recorded in her Journal, "most enthusiastic, hearty, and gratifying in every way ; the people quite deafening us with their cheers ; horsemen and gigs, etc., going along with us." The Eton boys turned out in a body to welcome them, running alongside the carriage, swarming up the mound, and making the old Castle ring again with such cheers and shouts as only sound-lunged, high-spirited schoolboys can give utterance to.

The honeymoon was a short one, so far as quiet privacy was concerned. The business of a great country does not allow long intervals of seclusion to its statesmen and governors. Accordingly, on February 12th, the Duchess of Kent, the Duke of Coburg and his elder son, with the whole of the Court, followed the wedded pair to Windsor ; and on the 14th they all returned to London, and the reception of congratulatory addresses began. The 28th was a sad day to Prince Albert ; for on that day his beloved father left England, to the sore distress of his affectionate spirit. "He said to me," writes the Queen in her Journal,—and it is but one of the many records which display, quite unconsciously, the goodness of her own heart

and the true English loveliness of her nature,—“that I had never known a father, and could not therefore feel what he did. His childhood had been very happy. Ernest, he said, was now the only one remaining here of all his earliest ties and recollections ; but that if I continued to love him as I did now, I could make up for all. He never cried, he said, in general, but Alvensleben and Kolowrath had cried so much that he was quite overcome. O, how I did feel for my dearest, precious husband at this moment ! Father, brother, friends, country—all has he left, and all for me. God grant that I may be the happy person, the *most* happy person, to make this dearest, blessed being happy and contented ! What is in my power to make him happy I will do.”

Prince Albert's brother, Ernest, the Hereditary Prince, remained with the royal pair, a welcome guest, till the 8th of May, when he also took leave of the young couple ; and then the Prince felt as if the last tie to his native land was broken.



LIFE IN ENGLAND.

1840—1848.

WHEREVER in the world I am,
In whatso'er estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate,
And a work of lowly love to do
For the Lord on whom I wait.

There are briers besetting every path,
That call for patient care ;
There is a cross in every lot,
And an earnest need for prayer ;
But the loving heart that leans on Thee
Is happy anywhere.

A. L. WARING.



(Osborne House.)

CHAPTER IV.

LIFE IN ENGLAND.

1840-1848.

PRINCE ALBERT now manfully braced himself to the performance of the duties of his high station, to the formation of new friendships, and the acquisition of new habits. From the voluntary studies and innocent pleasures of light-hearted youth he

seemed to have leapt at one bound into the cares of manhood. True, there was all the joy of a happy marriage; the constant companionship of one whose whole soul had already learnt to look up to him with loving admiration. There was the certainty that by one friend at least he would never be misunderstood; that at his own hearth he would find a domestic love as warm as at the lowliest, a shelter from the storms common to mortals of all ranks. Still, the task he now encountered was one that demanded all the courage and self-sacrifice of a noble nature.

There were those, we are told, who would have kept the Prince apart from all public business, and would also have withheld from him his proper authority in the domestic circle. This latter he soon saw the necessity of claiming and exerting. "In my home life," he wrote in May of this year (1840), "I am very happy and contented; but the difficulty in filling my place with the proper dignity is, that I am only the husband, not the master in the house." But with firm yet gentle hand he seized the position which he felt to be both rightful and necessary for domestic peace and comfort; and the Queen, with characteristic right feeling and straightforwardness, seconded his efforts, and, turning a deaf ear to those who would urge that, as Sovereign, she must be the only head of the family and household, as well as of the State, and that her husband was but one of her subjects, she, with perfect love and confidence, upheld him in that high place in her house which he already occupied in her heart; declaring that she had

solemnly engaged at the altar to "obey" as well as to "love" and "honour," and that she could not consent to limit or explain away that sacred obligation.

The Prince now began that course of hard work which ended only with his life; studying the politics of the day with great industry, and resolutely holding himself "aloof from all parties;" taking "active interest in all national institutions and associations;" gaining information on all subjects from the Ministers; reading all the foreign despatches, committing to paper his views upon them, and then communicating these to the Premier, Lord Melbourne. But the best summary of his labours is given in his own simple words, written to his father in April, 1841: "I endeavour quietly to be of as much use to Victoria in her position as I can."

The formation of his household upon a proper footing engaged his early attention. The appointment of Mr. Anson as his private secretary was scarcely in accordance with his own wishes, and he reluctantly acquiesced in it. However, Anson proved to be a rough diamond, and devoted himself fully and affectionately to Prince Albert's service and interests as long as he lived; and when he died suddenly, in 1849, the Prince lamented him as his only intimate friend. "We went," said he to the Queen when the sad news reached him, "we went through everything together since I came here. He was almost like a brother to me."

The reception of the numerous addresses of congrat-

ulation was a trying ordeal for the Prince. On one day alone, March 7th, 1840, he received and answered, in person, no fewer than twenty-seven addresses. At first, the Queen tells us, he was a little nervous on these occasions, though not nearly so nervous as some of the worthies by whom the addresses were presented, and about whom his secretary was accustomed to tell some laughable stories. He was also much tried by the change in his mode of life,—the late hours especially,—and by the difference of climate. All his life long he had been accustomed to pass much of his time in the pure open air, and to rise early and retire to rest in good time. Doubtless the thick London atmosphere weighed heavily upon his brain; and the dinners and balls and other gaieties which kept the royal couple up unreasonably late and drove off breakfast to a fashionable hour, leaving little time for outdoor exercise, had anything but a wholesome effect upon him. Gradually, however, the Prince's firm but gentle influence effected an improvement, and the hours and occupations of each day were judiciously adjusted and regulated. We have the following interesting account of their habits at this period:

“At this time the Prince and Queen seem to have spent their day much as follows: they breakfasted at nine, and took a walk every morning soon afterwards. Then came the usual amount of business (far less heavy, however, than now); besides which they drew and etched a great deal together, which was a source of great amusement, having the plates ‘*bit*’ in the house. Luncheon followed at the usual

hour of two o'clock. Lord Melbourne, who was generally staying in the house, came to the Queen in the afternoon, and between five and six the Prince usually drove her out in a pony phaeton. If the Prince did not drive the Queen, he rode, in which case she took a drive with the Duchess of Kent or the ladies. The Prince also read aloud most days to the Queen. The dinner was at eight o'clock, and always with the company. In the evening the Prince frequently played at double chess, a game of which he was very fond, and which he played extremely well."

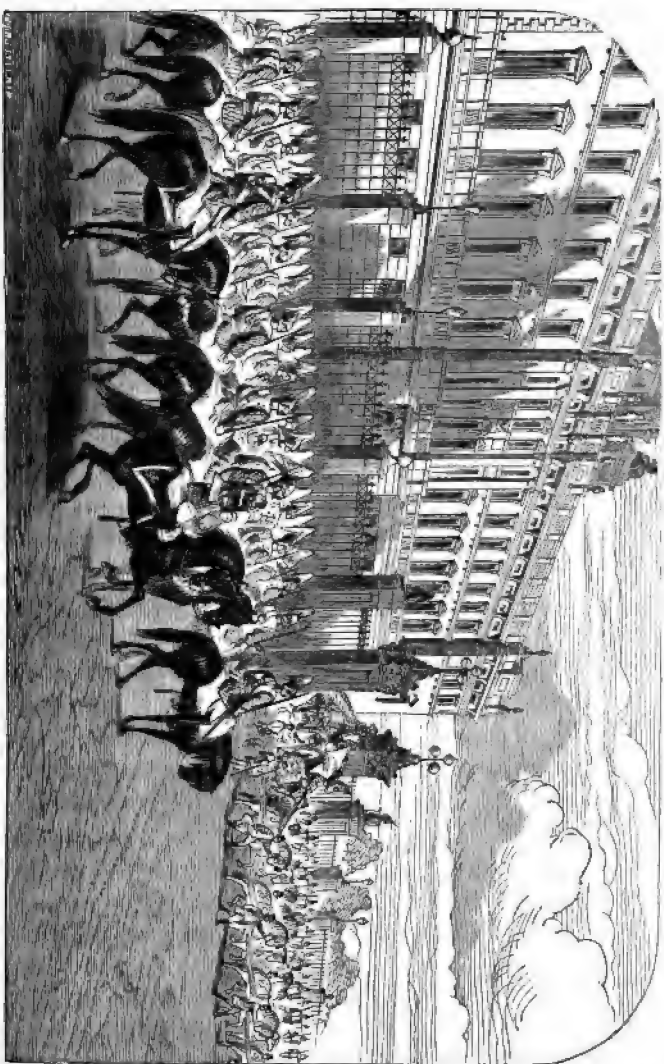
The Easter of 1840 was spent at Windsor, and on the Sunday the Queen and the Prince took the sacrament of the Lord's Supper together for the first time, in St. George's Chapel. He had, Her Majesty informs us, "a very strong feeling about the solemnity of this act, and did not like to appear in company either the evening before or on the day on which he took it, and he and the Queen almost always dined alone on these occasions." Another time, a few months later, the same devout feeling is noted by the Queen, who records in her Journal, about Christmas time: "We two dined together, as Albert likes being quite alone before he takes the sacrament. We played part of Mozart's *Requiem*, and then he read to me out of the *Stunden der Andacht* ('Hours of Devotion') the article on *Selbsterkenntniss* ('Self-knowledge')."

On Easter Monday of the same year, the Prince met with a serious accident; his horse, a very vicious thoroughbred, taking the bit between its teeth and running away at the top of its speed, the Prince,

after vain attempts at turning the animal, being dashed against a tree and knocked off from his saddle. To add to the interest of this narrow escape, his royal bride was watching his movements from the Castle windows; but, though dismayed at the violent manœuvres of the steed, was not aware of the fall till informed of it by Prince Ernest. When Her Majesty arrived at Ascot, "Albert," she writes in her Journal, "received me on the terrace of the large stand, and led me up. He looked very pale, and said he had been much alarmed lest I should have been frightened by his accident. . . . He told me he scraped the skin off his poor arm, had bruised his hip and knee, and his coat was torn and dirty. It was a frightful fall, and might (I shudder to think of the danger my dearest, precious, inestimable husband was in) have been nearly fatal! The horse ran away from the very door, Albert said. He turned him round and round, lost his stirrup, and then he dashed through the trees, and threw Albert violently against a tree, the last near the wall, the force of which brought him to the ground. He scraped his arm and wrenched his hand by holding it up to prevent the tree coming against his side. O, how thankful I felt that it was no worse! His anxiety was all for me, not for himself."

Such a severe accident served but to bring out the intense affection of the young couple, and to prepare them, in a measure, for other perils and fresh providential deliverances.

The Queen's birthday was kept by the royal pair at Claremont in private. Her Majesty, in her solitary



(Buckingham Palace)

unmarried state, had always been glad to go to London, and unwilling to leave it; but now, like her husband, and sharing his pure tastes and strong love for the country, she hailed with delight these brief rural visits, and found the pleasures of a peaceful, quiet, yet merry life in the country, in the company of the one dear "friend of her soul, lord of her bosom," to be at once more solid and more fascinating than the excitements of London. The feeling of preference for the country grew upon her, and residence in the metropolis became very distasteful to her, being injurious to her health, and only rendered endurable by having her beloved husband at her side, to help her and support her under the burden of State ceremonials and courtly routine.

But, intense as was Prince Albert's passion for the country, he was always anxious for the Queen to spend as much time in London as she could, both for the convenience of the Ministry, and from a persuasion of the influence which the presence of a high-toned Court in a capital is sure to exercise upon all classes. Probably, too, his practical good sense speedily realized the injury which the absence of a Court from the mother-city for any length of time inflicts upon trade throughout the land. Yet it was a great sacrifice for him to spend many days or weeks at Buckingham Palace; and when he regained the pure air, he would exclaim, "Now I am free; now I can breathe." "I feel," he writes from Windsor, "as if in Paradise in this fine fresh air, instead of the dense smoke of London. The thick, heavy atmosphere

there quite weighs one down. The town is also so large that, without a long ride or walk, you have no chance of getting out of it. Besides this, wherever I show myself, I am still followed by hundreds of people."

It was on the 1st of June, 1840, that Prince Albert made his maiden speech in public. Trying his wings in a new atmosphere, he essayed only a short flight. But the occasion was a noble one, and well worthy of the amount of adventure involved in speaking to a brilliant assembly in a strange tongue. It was a Meeting for the Abolition of Slavery; and the Prince's words, though few, were very appropriate; and, delivered with just enough foreign accent to render them interesting and pleasing to the ear, produced great effect on the large audience.

"I have been induced," said the Prince, "to preside at the Meeting of this Society, from a conviction of its paramount importance to the great interests of humanity and justice. I deeply regret that the benevolent and persevering exertions of England to abolish that atrocious traffic in human beings—at once the desolation of Africa and the blackest stain upon civilized Europe—have not as yet led to any satisfactory conclusion. But I sincerely trust that this great country will not relax in its efforts until it has finally, and for ever, put an end to a state of things so repugnant to the spirit of Christianity, and the best feelings of our nature. Let us therefore trust that Providence will prosper our exertions in so holy a cause, and that, under the auspices of our Queen and

her Government, we may at no distant period be rewarded by the accomplishment of the great and humane object for the promotion of which we have this day met."

The scene of this *début* was, we believe, Exeter Hall; and Prince Albert could not fail to be deeply impressed with the sight of the crowded thousands densely packed before and around him; and we cannot wonder that, as he tells his father, he had "fear and nervousness to conquer" before he began his speech. It was indeed a scene to strike the young Prince with amazement; for never in his fatherland had he had an opportunity of gazing on so large a gathering of earnest philanthropists.

It was but a few days after this pleasurable and exciting scene that the Queen and the Prince had their first experience of the dangers which beset a throne, even though its occupant be good and fair and popular. On June 10th they were setting out on their usual afternoon drive, when a shabby little man, named Oxford, fired at the Queen, as the carriage was moving slowly up Constitution Hill. The following is the Prince's vivid account of the occurrence, written to his grandmother the Dowager Duchess of Gotha: "We had hardly proceeded a hundred yards from the palace, when I noticed, on the footpath on my side, a little, mean-looking man holding something towards us; and before I could distinguish what it was, a shot was fired, which almost stunned us both, it was so loud, and fired barely six paces from us. Victoria had just turned to the left to look at a horse, and

could not therefore understand why her ears were ringing, as from its being so very near she could hardly distinguish that it proceeded from a shot having been fired. The horses started and the carriage stopped. I seized Victoria's hands, and asked if the fright had not shaken her, but she laughed at the thing. I then looked again at the man, who was still standing in the same place, his arms crossed, and a pistol in each hand. His attitude was so affected and theatrical it quite amused me. Suddenly he again pointed his pistol and fired a second time. This time Victoria also 'saw the shot, and stooped quickly, drawn down by me. The ball must have passed just above her head, to judge from the place where it was found sticking in an opposite wall. The many people who stood round us and the man, and who were at first petrified with fright on seeing what happened, now rushed upon him. I called to the postilion to go on, and we arrived safely at Aunt Kent's."

It was a happy escape for the young couple, and both they and the country at large felt devoutly thankful to that Divine Providence which watches over prince and peasant. For some time after the occurrence their appearance in public was the signal for enthusiastic demonstrations of attachment and good feeling, and "God save the Queen" was sung unusually often "with heart and voice." On behalf of the wretched Oxford the plea of insanity was set up, and it being admitted by the jury, he was committed to a lunatic asylum for life. He appears, however, to have been no lunatic, but an idle good-for-nothing;

and, when told, in 1842, of the attempts of Francis and Bean on the Queen's life, had sense enough to declare that if he himself had been hanged, there would have been no more shooting at Her Majesty.

The cares of State gradually thickened upon the young husband, but he still found time to exercise those great talents with which he was endowed, and which had been sedulously and successfully cultivated. He devoted much of his small leisure to painting, of which he was very fond; and began a picture of the death of Posa, as described in Schiller's *Don Carlos*; making first a small and beautiful sketch. So with the sister art of music: thoroughly accomplished in its details, he played as a master on the organ, and composed charming and graceful songs, and sacred airs which take an honourable place in the tune-books of many English Churches. This delightful accomplishment grew dearer to him year by year, and his wearied spirit was often refreshed by resorting to the noble instrument, which he could handle so well, and giving vent to his feelings by means of its keys and pedals. Many visits did he pay to the studios of artists, to museums of art or science, and to benevolent institutions. His daily excursions included all parts of London where any improvements were being made, or anything was being done to further the recreation and health of the lower classes; and he was constantly alive to all that was going on in the great city, from Victoria Park to Battersea, from Regent's Park to the Crystal Palace. Hurrying back to luncheon, he would greet the Queen with a bright, loving smile, and describe

to her his varied route and the odd sights and strange occurrences he had seen in the busy thoroughfares of the big ant-hill.

At Windsor, as afterwards at Osborne and Balmoral, he displayed that remarkable talent for landscape gardening which has left permanent results in the increased beauty and charm of the surrounding scenery. The Home Park, under his quick eye and skilful hand, became, instead of a dark, damp, dismal retreat, a bright and cheerful bit of country.

As we have already intimated, Prince Albert was not content till he had set about attaining a more exact acquaintance with the institutions of the land with which he was now so intimately connected. He soon made arrangements with an eminent barrister, Mr. Selwyn, for a course of reading in the English laws and constitution; and delighted the old lawyer by his rapid intelligence and diligent attention, and his acuteness in discerning points of resemblance between English and German jurisprudence. With the Queen the Prince used also, in these early days, to read Hallam's invaluable *Constitutional History*. Occasionally he went out in the Park with a squadron of the 1st Life Guards, in order to become habituated to the English system of drill and words of command.

August 26th, 1840,—his twenty-first birthday,—was to the Prince a day, doubtless, of much thought and thankfulness. Here he found himself, in the prime of early manhood, blessed with the brightest domestic felicity, enthroned in the affectionate admiration of the highest lady of the land, and trying, in a

manly way, to understand thoroughly her sturdy subjects and to win their coy and cautious love. What a transition from the quiet, tranquil atmosphere of Coburg and Gotha! Yet he could not forget, amidst the splendours of a great Court, the simple attractions of his old home. It was the first birthday on which he had not been saluted with good wishes from his father's lips; and, as he writes to him, he tells him how on that memorable day his thoughts had been "naturally much at home." He describes to his aged grandmother the way in which the day was spent, and we see that there was not much time allowed for solitary meditation: "In the morning I was awoke by a *réveille*. We breakfasted with all the family, who are here, at Adelaide Cottage, which lies at the foot of the hill on which Windsor stands. Feodore's"—the Princess Hohenlohe, the Queen's sister—"children were dressed as Coburg peasants, and very funny they looked. In the afternoon I drove Victoria in a phaeton in the Park. The weather favoured the day very much. In the evening there was rather a larger dinner than usual."

On the 21st of November, 1840, a daughter was born to the royal pair, the beloved daughter who was afterwards to become the Crown Princess of Prussia. Prince Albert felt, for a moment only, a little disappointment that the firstborn was not a son; but this feeling immediately vanished, and throughout life the Princess was borne up in the arms of strong fatherly affection. The safety of the Queen claimed her father's first attention, and he was devoutly thank-

ful that everything passed off "very prosperously." On this, as on all subsequent occasions of the kind, his loving devotion to Her Majesty was, as she herself phrases it, "quite beyond expression." He was always at hand, to minister to her comfort; and would sit by her in the darkened room, to read to her or write for her. It was his strong yet gentle arm that lifted her from her bed to her sofa, and that helped to wheel her into the next room. "In short," as the Queen tells us, "his care of her was like that of a mother, nor could there be a kinder, wiser, or more judicious nurse."

The following Christmas was kept at Windsor, in the manner ever afterwards observed, and partaking both of the good old English method, and also of a genial German element which has been happily naturalized in most British homes. Christmas-trees were set up in the Queen's and the Prince's own apartments, and presents were given and received throughout the royal establishment.

On February 10th, 1841,—the anniversary of the marriage of her parents,—the Princess Royal was christened at Buckingham Palace, and named Victoria Adelaide Mary Louisa. The little lady seems to have conducted herself with due decorum on the occasion; and, as if quite conscious that the interest of the grand array of royal and ducal sponsors and great dignitaries of the Church was centred in her own small self, she "crowed," as her father records, "with immense satisfaction at the lights and brilliant uniforms."

On the previous day the Prince met with an

unpleasant accident while skating on the water behind Buckingham Palace. The ice had recently been broken at one spot, which had been frozen over again, and Prince Albert fell through the thin surface, a few yards from the bank, and had to swim for two or three minutes before he could extricate himself. The Queen herself was standing on the shore, and, though much alarmed, had enough presence of mind to help the Prince, while her attendant lady was screaming for assistance. The shock from immersion in the freezing water was very painful, but he escaped with nothing worse than a severe cold.

A general election taking place in the summer of this year, the Queen was at length deprived of the counsels of Lord Melbourne, who, as Premier, had been her chief adviser in political matters from the time of her accession to the throne. But he felt that his young Sovereign no longer stood in need of the helping hand and the sage advice which he had long been so happy to offer, to the best of his ability. He had the satisfaction of knowing that the Prince her husband was well fitted, by natural capacity and by training and acquirements, to be now the chief counsellor of the Crown in all dilemmas and difficulties; and he made Her Majesty "very proud" by the high opinion which he expressed as to His Royal Highness's "judgment, temper, and discretion." Sir Robert Peel, Lord Melbourne's successor, was a little nervous as to what his reception might be at the hands of the Prince; but he soon found that no enmity was borne to him, and he was placed completely at his ease by

Prince Albert's kind and hearty demeanour towards him. Sir Robert presently made the suggestion that the Prince should be placed at the head of a Royal Commission for the promotion and encouragement of the Fine Arts in connection with the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament. Prince Albert was thus brought into intimate acquaintance with many of the most distinguished men of the day.

On the 9th of November, 1841, the Prince of Wales was born, to the great joy of his illustrious parents. The Queen's recovery was rapid, and they both felt full of gratitude to God for their domestic happiness. The christening took place on the 25th of the following January, at St. George's Chapel, Windsor; Frederick William, King of Prussia, coming over specially to act as chief sponsor, and the royal babe demeaning himself "with truly princely decorum," as the *Times* reporter expressed it. By Prince Albert's special desire the "Hallelujah Chorus" was sung,—as being a musical tribute in which *all* could join,—instead of a new anthem, composed for the occasion, by Mr.—afterwards Sir George—Elvey.

The year 1842 was one of much anxiety for those in authority in England. Work was scarce, the price of food high, and Chartist agitators were taking advantage of the sufferings of the people to goad them on to the employment of physical force. A war was being carried on with China; and, worse than all, tidings came of the massacre of Sir William McNaghten and the almost total annihilation of the British forces at Cabul. Such a disaster had not happened to the

British arms for many a long year, and the whole land was covered with gloom.

To help in the revival of trade, the Court gave dinners, concerts, and balls; and the Queen declared her wish not to be exempt from the operation of the Income Tax which Sir Robert Peel had found it necessary to propose, in order to avert national bankruptcy.

In the midst of all their anxiety about public affairs the royal couple experienced another of the disagreeable concomitants of their high position. On Sunday, May 29th, as they were returning from the Chapel Royal, St. James's, the Prince saw a man step out from the crowd and present a pistol at him. He heard the trigger snap, but the pistol missed fire, and, curiously enough, the incident was unnoticed by any of the royal party except the Prince, who almost began to doubt his own senses and memory when he found that no one else had observed the occurrence. Next day, however, a boy called at Buckingham Palace and told what he had seen of the matter; which coincided with the Prince's own impressions. The Queen felt very nervous about the affair; but she and the Prince agreed that it would not be best to shut themselves up indoors, as they might have had to do for months, had they settled not to go out so long as the miscreant was at large. Accordingly they drove in the afternoon as usual, with minds somewhat ill at ease, and eyes glancing suspiciously behind the trees. After traversing the Parks in safety and driving to and from Hampstead, as they approached the Palace on their return, a shot was

fired at them between the Green Park and the Garden Wall, and passed underneath the carriage. The would-be assassin, John Francis, was immediately seized by a policeman; and the royal pair felt that a load was taken off their minds, and sent up heartfelt thanks to Him who had a second time preserved them amidst such alarming peril.

The miscreant's trial took place on the 17th of June, and he was found guilty of high treason. Sentence of death was pronounced upon him; but, by the Queen's special wish and influence, the capital punishment was commuted to transportation for life. The effect of this highly honourable clemency was unfortunately seen, the very day after its public announcement, in another outrage by a wretched hunchback, named Bean, who attempted to fire a pistol, loaded with powder, paper, and pieces of pipe, at the royal carriage. It was evident that such attempts must be treated in some other way than as acts of "high treason," the mere title of which seemed to add a lustre to them in the eyes of a certain class of excitable and unprincipled youths. A Bill was therefore drawn up and speedily passed through Parliament, which made such attempts punishable as high misdemeanours by transportation for seven years, or imprisonment for three years,—the culprit to be "publicly or privately whipped as often, and in such manner and form, as the Court should direct, not exceeding thrice." Under this enactment Bean was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment, and thus the chain of criminal attacks on the Sovereign was happily broken.

In July of the same year Prince Albert was gratified by a visit from his brother, Prince Ernest, who, with his bride, Princess Alexandrine of Baden, accompanied the royal pair to Claremont, where they often sought short intervals of change and refreshment from the excitement and worry of town life. While enjoying the peacefulness and freshness of the country, they received the sad intelligence of the death of the Duke of Orleans, whose horses had run away with him, and who had been killed in leaping from his carriage at Neuilly. The loss of the most popular member of the French royal family, the favourite brother of the Queen of the Belgians, was a great blow to the House of Orleans, which felt its full need of this its noblest son. What troubles he might have saved that dynasty if his life had been spared, or how his longer presence on earth might have altered the course of public events in Europe, we cannot venture to guess. The exclamation of our Queen, in one of her letters, seems almost to have been prompted by some anticipation of the reverses in store for Louis Philippe and his family: "Perhaps poor Chartres is saved great sorrow and grief. *Him* we must *not* pity."

The summer of 1842 was ever memorable to Prince Albert as being the time of his first visit to Scotland, recorded by Her Majesty herself, in that charming book, *Leaves from the Journal of our Life in the Highlands*. The impression made upon them both by the beautiful city of Edinburgh, now seen for the first time, was very great. "It is," writes the Queen, "totally unlike anything else I have seen; and what

is even more, Albert, who has seen so much, says it is unlike anything *he* ever saw." The enthusiasm of the people was intense and eager; but the royal visitors were well protected from inconvenient crushing by a body-guard of illustrious Scotchmen, who walked on each side of their carriage as they traversed the streets of the modern Athens. Amongst other novel sights Her Majesty seems to have been much struck with the long hair of the Scotch lassies, hanging loose and flowing in a style then little known in the south. At Dalkeith they both had a new sensation in tasting oatmeal porridge; they also enjoyed the genuine "Finnan haddies," and the Prince fancied that many of the people looked like Germans, which probably rendered them none the less pleasant to his eyes. The beautiful town of Perth, with its fine site and lovely surroundings, reminded him of the position of Basel. At Dunkeld they were favoured with Highland performances of a reel and the "sword dance."

At Taymouth good Lord Breadalbane, in full Highland dress, with a large number of followers, drawn up in front of the house, received the illustrious pair, who were much delighted with the strange scene. "The firing of the guns," Her Majesty notes, "the cheering of the great crowd, the picturesqueness of the dresses, the beauty of the surrounding country, with its rich background of wooded hills, altogether formed one of the finest scenes imaginable. It seemed as if a great chieftain in olden feudal times was receiving his Sovereign. It was princely and romantic." From this and other grand old seats they made excursions to

many points of interest and beauty; and the Prince shot grouse on the moors, and gained his first experience in deer-stalking; which he describes, in a letter to Prince Leiningen, as "one of the most fatiguing, but also one of the most interesting of pursuits."

It was a happy time for the young couple: the cares of State were left in the distance; choice company met and noble hosts entertained them; their spirits rose, and their health was improved, by such a pleasant change to "fresh woods and pastures new." Well might the Queen record, on their last day in Scotland: "It is really a delightful country, and I am very sorry to leave it." The Prince was captivated with its grand and severe beauty, its perfect adaptation for sport of all kinds, and the purity and lightness of its atmosphere.

A few sentences from the royal pen give a pleasing picture of the return voyage: "*Friday, September 16th.*—We heard that we had passed Flamborough Head at half-past five in the morning. The *Black Eagle* we passed at half-past eight last night, and we could only just see her smoke by the time we came on deck. At half-past nine I followed Albert on deck; it was a fine, bright morning. We had some coffee and walked about; we were then quite in the open sea; it was very fine all day. At five we were close to the *Rhadamanthus*, which had been in sight all day. We had a very pleasant little dinner on deck, in a small tent made of flags, at half-past five. We passed Yarmouth at about a quarter to six—very flat, and looking, Albert said, like a Flemish town. We

walked up and down on deck, admiring the splendid moonlight, which was reflected so beautifully on the sea. We went below at half-past seven, and I read the fourth and fifth cantos of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* to Albert, and then we played on the piano."

The beginning of the year 1843 brought with it new duties and cares. Amongst these was the necessity for some sort of organization in the royal household, in which, through the absurd division of the authorities who had a voice in the different departments and offices, a state of chaos seemed to be near at hand. Between the Lord Steward, the Lord Chamberlain, and the Master of the Horse, there was little harmony; and the majority of the servants, both male and female, were left to their own devices, and came and went as they chose. One great official could order the windows to be cleaned inside, but it depended on another "big wig" whether they should be brightened on the outside. Under such antiquated Spanish etiquette it was no wonder—though it did take the public a little by surprise at the time—that the ill-conditioned boy Jones was able to find his way into the innermost recesses of Buckingham Palace, in November, 1840, and was discovered crouching under a sofa in an apartment adjoining the Queen's bedroom.

By dint of that persevering steadfastness of purpose which was one of his noble characteristics, the Prince was enabled, after a while, to get the necessary reforms effected; and the heads of the several departments,

after long siege, yielded their various citadels of disorder to be occupied and arranged and united by the one authority of the Master of the Household: a change which relieved the Queen's husband from a weight of harassing cares.

On April 25th, 1843, another addition was made to the royal family. The new Princess was one whose name—Alice Maud Mary—was to become a treasure in every English household as synonymous with all that is "pure, lovely, and of good report."

The same year brought to light some results of the Fine Arts Commission in an Exhibition, at Westminster Hall, of Cartoons illustrative of English History and Poetry, for which prizes were offered; and the Prince watched with intense interest the love shown by the labouring classes for such pictures as illustrated any historical event; hoping, at the same time, that this taste might be developed and trained, so as to become an instrument of civilization and help in raising the style and value of our manufactures.

In July, 1843, the Prince had his attention specially called to the evils attendant on the barbarous practice of duelling, by the shocking catastrophe of Colonel Fawcett's death at the hand of his brother-in-law, Lieutenant Monro, in an "affair of honour."

The fact that such an absurd arrangement for settling disputes and preserving or clearing reputations had survived nearly to the middle of the nineteenth century, does not say much for the rapidity of our progress, as a nation, in Christianity and civilization.

By much effort and persistence Prince Albert, after trying in vain to get Courts of Honour established, at last had the satisfaction of seeing his purpose effected, and the pretext for duelling destroyed, by an amendment in the Articles of War, which affirmed the old Christian principle, that it is "suitable to the character of honourable men to apologize and offer redress for wrong or insult committed, and equally so for the party aggrieved to accept frankly and cordially explanation and apologies for the same."

The autumn was enlivened by a visit to the French royal family at Château d'Eu, near Tréport. With all his faults and mistakes in public life, Louis Philippe was admirable in the family circle; and Queen Victoria and Prince Albert thoroughly enjoyed the pleasant home life of the French Court, with the affectionate attentions of Queen Amélie and her children. A tour in Belgium followed; and, in October, a visit to Cambridge, where the royal couple were received, especially by the undergraduates, with great enthusiasm, and the degree of D.C.L. was conferred on the Prince. Later on, Sir Robert Peel entertained them at Drayton Manor, near Tamworth; and Prince Albert embraced the opportunity of running over to Birmingham, and making himself familiar with the manners and industries of the chief seat of the hardware manufacture.

The year 1844 was not many weeks old before the Prince experienced a severe shock in the death of his father after a few hours' illness. He had intended shortly to visit the Duke, and renew the recollections

of his happy boyhood ; and this sudden loss of his nearest relative was felt as peculiarly bitter, especially because, amidst the suspicions with which many of the English people usually regarded and rewarded foreigners, he had the greater need of warm, unwavering friendship and confidence. The immediate effect of the calamity was to knit the Prince's whole soul in still closer affection to his royal consort, whose heart was as his heart in all things, and who looked up to him with ever-increasing admiration and love.

In the Easter recess Prince Albert thought it best to go over to Coburg, to close accounts there and help to arrange for the future working of the political machinery of the Dukedom. The Queen had never till now been separated from him for a whole day since their marriage, and suffered greatly at his departure, which yet she would not hinder, knowing his errand to be one of necessity and duty. After his return from the scenes of his youth, he made the Queen a present, on her birthday, of a beautiful miniature of himself by Thorburn, who, as was his wont, was highly successful in rendering a fine face in its noblest mood.

Shortly afterwards the King of Saxony, and, a day later, the Emperor of Russia, arrived as guests at Buckingham Palace. The latter potentate was that pugnacious Nicholas whose troops, ten years afterward, England and France confronted in the Crimean war. His behaviour during his stay in England—chiefly at Windsor Castle—was marked by great polite-

ness and generosity ; and his handsome person, gallant bearing, and knightly courtesy to the fair sex, rendered him agreeable and popular in very various company ; though there was often a glare in his eyes which must have reminded people of the old proverb about the Russian being but a Tartar thinly skinned over. The other royal guest was a very different man,—the mild, unassuming King of Saxony, to whom the year of the Crimean war—1854—was to be an eventful and fatal crisis.

On August 6th a second son was born to the Prince, and on September 4th received in baptism the names Alfred Ernest Albert,—now H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh. In September the Queen and Prince Albert paid their second visit to the Highlands of Scotland, and were again so enchanted with the sweet and simple mountain life as to quit it with keen regret. "There is," writes Her Majesty, "a great peculiarity about the Highlands and Highlanders ; and they are such a chivalrous, fine, active people. Our stay among them was so delightful. Independently of the beautiful scenery, there was a quiet, a retirement, a wildness, a liberty, and a solitude that had such a charm for us."

This was a year of royal visits. On the 7th of October Louis Philippe came over to England,—the first King of France that had ever paid a friendly visit to an English sovereign on British ground. The old gentleman, to whom England had been a harbour of refuge in his long exile during the first French Empire, was beyond measure delighted with his reception, and his warm heart glowed with pleasure in the happy

domestic group which he found so beautifully set in the centre of an illustrious Court. Of Prince Albert he formed the highest opinion ; and foretold his future eminence and renown for sagacity and goodness.

On October 28th the Queen, accompanied by the Prince, opened the Royal Exchange, and was enthusiastically received in the City of London. The royal pair began happily to realize the grand effect which their pure domestic life, and their careful abstention from party politics, were already exercising upon the nation at large. They were now laying the foundations of those citadels and bulwarks which were, within four short years from this time, so well to protect the throne and stem the waves of democracy which swept away or severely shook so many European dynasties.

A visit to Lord Exeter at Burleigh ended the travels of this busy and exciting year,—a year of great grief to the Prince from the loss of his beloved father, yet a year of much domestic happiness, and also of much activity and hard work, which, to his as yet unbroken constitution, was the very highest form of enjoyment.

Early in 1845 visits were paid to the Duke of Buckingham at Stowe, and to the Duke of Wellington at Strathfieldsaye. The aged warrior was delighted to have his Queen and her princely husband under his own roof ; and they, on their side, felt high pleasure in enjoying for a couple of days the hospitality and converse of so remarkable a man.

The early spring was made memorable by the purchase of the estate of Osborne in the Isle of Wight, and by the laying of the foundation-stone of a new

house there by the Queen and Prince. It was a lovely spot in a charming country; and the new building was admirably planned by the Prince, and well carried through by Mr. Cubitt, the builder. By its situation it commanded fine views of Spithead and the Solent; and the rural sights and sounds which hemmed it in were greatly to the taste of Prince Albert, who was enthusiastically fond of the music of the feathered tribe, and to whom the fresh air and sweet repose of this new island home presented irresistible attractions. Here he had full scope for his talent in laying out garden and landscape, and for clothing with material form those ideas to which he was ever giving birth, for the improvement of labourers' cottages, and for the higher cultivation of the soil; therein setting, in all respects, a model for landlords, farmers, and masters in general.

A trip to Ireland had been planned for the autumn of 1845; and Her Majesty entertained a strong desire to visit that interesting part of her dominions. Its condition, however, was just then more than usually unsettled: agrarian outrages were rife; there had been a wet summer and a bad harvest; so that it was thought best to defer the journey to happier and fitter times. Instead of it, the Queen and Prince resolved to take a brief tour by way of the Rhine to Saxony; the former being naturally desirous of seeing the pleasant land in which her beloved husband had passed his early years. Starting on the 9th of August, they steamed from Woolwich to Antwerp in the royal yacht. At Malines they were met

by King Leopold and his Queen, who accompanied them to the frontier. Traversing the lovely valleys of the south of Belgium, connected by tunnels illuminated, for the occasion, with lamps and torches, they reached Verviers, where their royal uncle and aunt took leave of them. At Aix-la-Chapelle the King of Prussia, with his brother and other relatives, received the illustrious travellers, and some young ladies, arrayed in white, recited verses of welcome. At Cologne their reception was enthusiastic, and the roadway of the unsavoury city had been copiously sprinkled with the celebrated *eau*,—a measure which had in it a smack of ingenious advertisement as well as of wise sanitary precaution.

On arriving at Bonn, Prince Albert felt himself at home amongst the scenes of his happy University career, and in the presence of the dons and Professors who had lectured and enlightened and amused him in days of yore. In company with the Queen he revisited the little house where he had lived, and the tiny bower in the garden, with its lovely view of the Kreuzburg and of the Sieben Gebirge.

August 15th found the royal pilgrims proceeding up the Rhine, from Bonn to Stolzenfels, in a truly royal progress; for the steamer had on board three Queens, of England, Prussia, and Belgium, two Kings, a Prince Consort, an Archduke, and the Prince and Princess of Prussia, now Emperor and Empress of Germany. Travelling through the beautiful Bavarian territory, they reached the Coburg frontier, and were cordially welcomed by Duke Ernest, Prince

Albert's elder brother. Soon they arrived at the Rosenau, and the Queen was charmed beyond measure with the lovely scenery, the pleasant abode, and the simple rooms in which the Princes had passed their youthful days. Her Majesty gazed on all these scenes of beauty, and their numerous objects of interest, with eyes of intense affection. She had so often heard them described and alluded to, by him who was dearest of all to her, that she seemed to have a tender recollection of each scene and object just as if she herself had passed a happy childhood in their midst. The Prince, too, was glad to renew his acquaintance with the fond surroundings of his boyhood; and, above all, to point out to his beloved consort each memorable spot, each little room or quaint contrivance of mechanism, connected with the bygone days.

Prince Albert's birthday—August 26th—was spent at this picturesque domain, where he was born twenty-six years before; and as twelve summers had glided away since he had commemorated a similar anniversary there, we may well suppose that his thoughts ran back over the time that had passed since he was a boy of fourteen, and took account of the marvellous change that had come upon himself in those few short years. Boyish dreams of love and ambition and high resolve had become solid realities; and though he had found that a lofty position was often dimmed by thick clouds, and that there is no lot on earth that is free from some amount of care and disappointment, his heart overflowed with gratitude for the past, untiring hope for the future, and firm faith in

that watchful Providence, without a belief in which the world would be the dreariest of deserts. It was a specially happy day for the Queen, tinged though it could not but be with sadness from the thought that it was their last day at the peaceful Rosenau.

Next morning they started away, through Meiningen and the Thuringian Forest, to Reinhardtsbrunn,—another lovely seat of Duke Ernest, which we have already mentioned in connection with Prince Albert's early days. Hence they proceeded to Gotha, on a visit to the Prince's grandmother, the Dowager Duchess, at her palace of Friedrichsthal. Here several happy days were spent, varied by excursions to the great Forest, to the haunts of his boyhood, to the last resting-place of his father, and the room where he died.

The home journey of the royal travellers included "a steam" down the Rhine in their yacht the *Fairy*, a call at Antwerp, and, finally, a brief visit to the King of the French at the Château d'Eu. Osborne was reached on the 10th of September; the Queen and Prince having had a pleasant change, for more than a month, from the wearing routine of their ordinary public and private life in England.

Plenty of public care and trouble was awaiting them on their return. The prolonged rains had seriously affected the corn-yield in England; and in Ireland the potato-crop seemed in danger of total destruction by a new disease which was rapidly spreading through the staple food of the Green Island.

The Premier, Sir Robert Peel, saw that, under the threatened approach of a famine, it would be necessary to suspend, or do away with, the duties on foreign corn, and give it free access to British purchasers. This line of policy being in direct opposition to that which his party had long laid down, and being utterly destructive of the "protection" to which they had pledged themselves, Sir Robert resigned office, and Lord John Russell, who had just given utterance to Free Trade sentiments, attempted to form a Ministry, but without success. This is not the place to enter into a detailed history of the *ins* and *outs* of party policy. Suffice it to say that the great Minister resumed office, losing none of his former colleagues save Lord Stanley, the late Earl Derby; and that the Queen's speech at the opening of the session of 1846 foreshadowed the change which was felt to be imperatively necessary in the old Corn Laws.

The debate on Sir Robert Peel's Resolutions to this effect was long and fiery. And Prince Albert, having a strong desire to hear the chief orators of the country, and to witness a grand scene of constitutional excitement, was present in the House of Commons on the first night of the discussion. This very reasonable proceeding, however, was the subject of such bitter remark from Lord George Bentinck and others, that the Prince felt himself precluded from this excellent and pleasurable opportunity of testing the current of popular ideas. The Corn Bill passed; but Sir Robert, having given up his old party ties, was defeated, on the

Irish Coercion Bill, in the House of Commons, on the very night on which the former measure passed the House of Lords, and finally left office. Both the Prince and the Queen felt great regret at his resignation, knowing the sterling worth and warm patriotism which existed beneath his cold and stately exterior.

On May 25th, 1846, another Princess was born, and was afterwards christened by the names "Helena Augusta Victoria." In July, Prince Albert made his first acquaintance with the port of Liverpool, where he opened new docks which were to bear his name, laid the foundation-stone of a Sailors' Home, and left the people impressed with his courtesy, goodness, and intelligence.

In the autumn the steam yacht *Victoria and Albert* bore Her Majesty and the Prince along the beautiful coast of Devonshire to Dartmouth and Plymouth, and thence to Guernsey; a trip which they both enjoyed much. In September they paid a visit to Jersey; and then to Cornwall, and were much interested in the peculiarities of the English peninsula. Arriving at Mount's Bay, "We disembarked," writes the Queen, "and walked up the Mount by a circuitous rugged path over rocks and turf, and entered the old castle, which is beautifully kept, and must be a nice house to live in, as there are so many good rooms in it. The dining-room, made out of the refectory, is very pretty; it is surrounded by a frieze, representing ancient hunting. The chapel is excessively curious. The organ is much famed: Albert played a little on it, and it sounded very fine. Below the chapel is a

dungeon, where some years ago was discovered the skeleton of a large man without a coffin ; the entrance is in the floor of one of the pews. Albert went down with Lord Spencer, and afterwards went with him and Sir James Clark (who, with Lord Palmerston and Colonel Grey, had joined us) up to the tower, on the top of which is 'St. Michael's chair,' which, it is said, betrothed couples run up to, and whoever gets first into the chair will have at home the government of the house. And the old housekeeper—a nice tidy old woman—said, 'Many a couple does go there !' though Albert and Lord Spencer said it was the awkwardest place possible to get at. . . . Albert made a most beautiful little sketch of St. Michael's Mount." Here we see how his cultivated powers, as artist and musician, added to the zest with which he enjoyed such a cruise.

In February, 1847, the death of the Duke of Northumberland left vacant the Chancellorship of the University of Cambridge, and Prince Albert was elected to fill that post of honour, for which, as Bishop Blomfield wrote, not only his exalted rank, but his scientific and literary attainments, and the distinction of his own academical career, pointed him out as peculiarly fitted. His installation did not take place till the following July, when Her Majesty accompanied him to the ancient seat of learning, and was at once amused and touched with having to receive a formal Address from her beloved Prince, who "looked dear and beautiful in his robes." A "pleasant and interesting" period of three days was spent at Cambridge,

and the Queen returned to town deeply gratified at seeing her husband honoured and esteemed as he deserved to be.

The year 1847 was the dire year of the Irish famine. This was the principal topic in the Queen's speech at the opening of Parliament; and the sentences referring to it were delivered by Her Majesty in a subdued, sympathetic tone, which at the time attracted much attention. But neither public nor private moneys, liberally as they were poured forth, were potent to stay the dreadful plague of want in Ireland and the west of Scotland; and even England herself, though she ungrudgingly voted immense sums, suffered greatly from the high price of wheat.

In the autumn the Queen and Prince, with their two eldest children, paid another visit to Scotland, in the royal yacht. It was a rainy, windy, snowy season; and the Prince's thoughts, hovering over the unsettled state of Europe, were naturally tinged with the sombre hues of the political and the physical horizon. He was in the habit of relieving his burdened mind by writing frequently to his friend Baron Stockmar; laying down to him the principles on which he thought that England should act in certain emergencies. In brief, they were as follows: not to attempt to "plunge" States into constitutional reforms for which they had no appetite; but, on the other hand, to be the defence and support of such States as, when setting about internal reforms which they considered necessary for themselves, were interfered with from without. There was much wisdom in these axioms. They were the

outcome of a clear perception of the little jets of flame that were now shooting up through the thin cracking crust of the Continent, and which were, in the coming year, to burst forth with volcanic fury and to change the face of Europe. Much wisdom was there, too, in the letters which Prince Albert addressed to Lord John Russell, embodying his own and Her Majesty's views on foreign policy, and evincing a marvellous amount of sagacity in so young a student of statecraft.

It was on this voyage that the Royal party first visited the isles of Staffa and Iona, and other points of grandeur and beauty on the west coast of Scotland. "It was the first time," writes Her Majesty, "the British standard, with a Queen of Great Britain, and her husband and children, had ever entered Fingal's Cave; and the men gave three cheers, which sounded very impressive there." A shooting lodge at Ardverrickie, on Loch Laggan, was their abode for a month; but the weather was unusually unpropitious, and though the surrounding scenery was of the loveliest, its beauty was often blotted out by mist or blurred by rain. Like commoner folk, the Royal party made the best of it; and we may be sure that the lodge did not want for cheery life and pleasant home parties. Above all, a stay there insured an amount of privacy which to Royalty was a treat all the greater from its rarity. The return voyage to Liverpool was very rough; and probably it was a pleasure to finish the trip in the less violent oscillations of a railway train, and to gain the shelter of a substantial, well-roofed palace.

Later on in the year the Prince found both relief

and occupation for his mind in resuming the congenial task of laying out the grounds at Osborne, tastefully altering terraces and slopes, and judiciously selecting and planting a variety of trees and shrubs. Christmas was spent at Windsor, and was a time of thorough home happiness. In his children's enjoyment and delight at the Christmas-trees he lived over again his own child-life with his father and brother at the Rosenau.

The year 1848 rose upon Europe with omens of upheaval and overthrow. It was but twelve days old when disturbances broke out in Palermo, and all Sicily burst into a flame. The King of Naples promised a new Constitution; but, with the blind Bourbon obstinacy which distinguished him, refused to make adequate concessions. Prince Albert recognised the first fringe of the overhanging storm, and saw, too, that Paris was likely to lie under the full burst of the tempest; for Louis Philippe and Guizot were displaying an unwise boldness in coercion, and, in refusing to allow the great Reform Banquet to take place, were closing the safety valve which might have averted an explosion. By February 26th all was over with the Orleans dynasty, and the several members of the King's family were hastening, by various route and in odd disguise, to take refuge in England, the land which but lately they had treated with something very like contempt.

Just at this time of strange events and rapid changes, tidings came of the death of the Prince's grandmother, the Dowager Duchess of Gotha, who

loved him so dearly, and to whom he was attached with the passionate affection of a large heart. It was not surprising that, tried as his nerves were with the shocks of startling political news from day to day, this sudden domestic loss should have, for the moment, prostrated him. "My poor Albert," writes the Queen, "is quite beaten down with all this, and is so pale and sad it breaks my heart." He felt it to be a merciful alleviation of his grief that his brother the Duke of Coburg and his Duchess were then on a visit to him and the Queen. And he was able speedily to assure Stockmar that, though sorely in need of friends and of counsel, he was not cast down. Soon he could thank God that his good grandmother had not lived to witness the stormy times, which would have torn her heart asunder.

On the 18th of March another Princess was added to the royal family—the Princess Louise; and Prince Albert rejoiced with the grateful joy of a good husband at the safety and health of the Queen, whose courage rose with the emergencies of the times, and cheered the consort on whom she had so often leaned for support and comfort.

Only three weeks after this domestic event the royal family moved from Buckingham Palace to Osborne, yielding to the earnest entreaties of Her Majesty's Ministers, who thought it advisable for the Court to be away from London on April 10th; a day which was looked forward to with some apprehension on account of the Chartist "demonstration" which was threatened then to take place. It was a memo-

Shaftesbury's schemes for improving the condition of the labouring classes, and showing his earnest interest in them. Putting on one side all the scruples and warnings of over-cautious friends and advisers, he took the chair at a public meeting of the Society which had this noble object in view, and of which he had, four years before, consented to become the President. Here he made a speech full of sound sense and goodwill, and gave the public, in a manly, modest style, some idea of the stuff that was in him, and of his earnest, practical philanthropy. "Depend upon it," he said, "the interests of classes too often contrasted are identical, and it is only ignorance which prevents their uniting for each other's advantage. To dispel that ignorance, to show how man can help man, ought to be the aim of every philanthropic person; but it is more peculiarly the duty of those who, under the blessing of Divine Providence, enjoy station, wealth, and education.

"Let them be careful, however, to avoid any dictatorial interference with labour and employment, which frightens away capital, destroys that freedom of thought and independence of action which must remain to every one if he is to work out his own happiness, and impairs that confidence under which alone engagements for mutual benefit are possible.

"God has created man imperfect, and left him with many wants, as it were to stimulate each to individual exertion, and to make all feel that it is only by united exertions and combined action that these imperfections can be supplied and these wants satisfied. This pre-

supposes self-reliance and confidence in each other. To show the way how these individual exertions can be directed with the greatest benefit, and to foster that confidence upon which the readiness to assist each other depends, this Society deems its most sacred duty."

The Prince was rewarded by the success of his venture. Instead of being mobbed and hooted down, as some of the faint-hearts around him had foretold he would be, he felt that his spirit and motives had won a better appreciation from the English people; that he had broken through a portion of their wall of prejudice against a Prince of foreign birth; and he was encouraged to mix a little more freely with them, and to say a few appropriate words to a different audience at the July Meeting of the Royal Agricultural Society at York. Those words were "fit, though few;" and the Queen was proud that her husband, overcoming the difficulties which beset speech in a strange tongue, was beginning to enjoy the gratification attendant on the clear utterance of good thoughts to an enthusiastic audience.

The year of revolution went on its way, unique in the frequency of its political explosions. In Italy, Charles Albert was fighting the Austrians. Germany was in unease and uproar. The French Government tried some Socialistic experiments, and, on their failure, fought the deluded *ouvriers* three days in the streets of Paris, and gained a dreadful victory over their own countrymen, taking fifteen thousand prisoners, many of whom were shot, and many died of gaol

fever. In Ireland, Mitchell had run his seditious career, challenging the Government to put him down, either in the law courts or in the fields or streets; and had been taken at his word, and put down accordingly, and banished to Bermuda: while Smith O'Brien and his brother braggart, Meagher "of the sword," breaking into open rebellion, were sentenced to death; but the punishment was commuted to transportation for life.

It was in September, 1848, that the Queen and Prince, distracted and wearied with the noise and racket of the last eight months, wended their way northward, and visited for the first time their new estate at Balmoral, which was to be the scene of so many happy, health-restoring holidays, and to give fresh scope to Prince Albert's genius for planning, laying out, and improving, till the building and its surroundings became impressed with the characteristics of his tasteful, creative mind. We quote from that charming little book, *Leaves from the Journal of our Life in the Highlands*, Her Majesty's own account of their first impressions of this picturesque locality: "We arrived at Balmoral at a quarter to three. It is a pretty little castle in the old Scottish style. There is a picturesque tower and garden in front, with a high wooded hill; at the back there is a wood down to the Dee; and the hills rise all around. There is a nice little hall, with a billiard-room; next to it is the dining-room. Upstairs (ascending by a good broad staircase), immediately to the right, and above the dining-room, is our sitting-room (formerly the

drawing-room), a fine, large room; next to which is our bed-room, opening into a little dressing-room which is Albert's. Opposite, down a few steps, are the children's and Miss Hildyard's three rooms. The ladies live below, and the gentlemen upstairs.

"We lunched almost immediately, and at half-past four we walked out, and went up to the top of the wooded hill opposite our windows, where there is a cairn, and up which there is a pretty winding path. The view here, looking down from the house, is charming. To the left you look towards the beautiful hills surrounding Loch-na-Gar, and to the right, towards Ballater, to the glen (or valley) along which the Dee winds, with beautiful wooded hills, which reminded us very much of the Thüringerwald. It was so calm, and so solitary, it did one good as one gazed around; and the pure mountain air was most refreshing. All seemed to breathe freedom and peace, and to make one forget the world and its sad turmoils."

The royal pair thoroughly enjoyed the calm of this mountain solitude. Their quiet was, however, a good deal marred by the mixed news which came in by every post from the Continent. Yet, before leaving for the South, the Prince was able to devote one delightful day to an excursion in company with the distinguished geologist, Mr., thenceforth Sir Charles, Lyell.

In the latter part of this year a reform, which the Prince had advocated for some time, was carried out in the University of Cambridge; it being made

incumbent on all candidates for a degree to attend at least one term of lectures in laws, physics, moral philosophy, chemistry, or botany, etc. Thus, through the influence of the Prince Chancellor, the cramped old routine of study and the narrow path to distinction were widened, to the great advantage of the coming race of students.

Ireland was again suffering severely, at the end of 1848, from the failure of the potato crop; and its sad state, due in the main to the careless, thriftless disposition of the people themselves, occupied much of Prince Albert's thoughts. That the British Government was not unmindful of Ireland in her deep distress is shown by the fact that during the years of famine it expended more than nine millions of money in relief, besides loans and grants and other payments amounting to over a million additional; whilst the private donations from London alone rose to a munificent amount, exceeding six hundred thousand pounds. The Prince thought and wrote much and wisely on the matter; but Ireland still remains England's difficulty.

In December, Louis Napoleon was elected President of the French Republic, to the rejection of General Cavaignac. Germany was still in ferment, and Italy in confusion; and we may well believe that Prince Albert, whose quick intelligence and strong sympathies made him more sensitive to the world's woes than were men of coarser fibre and harder hearts, was "heartily glad to say good-bye to" the year 1848. It had been a

year of intense anxiety to him, as well as of pleasing success. It had, too, been a year of thorough hard work; but as to that he felt no regret. Fitted by natural endowments and by liberal education to shine in the drawing-room, and in any gathering of talent and refinement, he found himself providentially placed in a position, to fulfil the duties of which, according to his own estimate of them, required him not only to give that intelligent attention to European politics which is a pleasure to most men of any mark, but also to labour at the desk with a drudgery which a banker's clerk would have felt to be very hard, but which to him was lightened by the reflection that it saved a vast amount of trouble to the Queen, and so was both his duty and his privilege.

In 1847 he had begun the practice of making a *précis* of all despatches and State documents that went through the Queen's hands, arranging and indexing them for reference: and when we find that in 1848 alone twenty-eight thousand despatches were received at the Foreign Office or sent out therefrom, all of which came before Her Majesty, we may form some slight idea of his ordinary every day's work. No wonder that mental fatigue, induced by constant and anxious work for the commonweal, brought on temporary fits of bodily disorder; and that finally, when the stamina of early manhood had been impaired, the weary brain sank overcome in the unequal contest.

Habitually an early riser, seven o'clock, even in

winter, found him up and speedily at work, preparing matter for the consideration of the Queen, who soon joined him in the sitting-room, where they laboured away, with their writing-tables side by side.

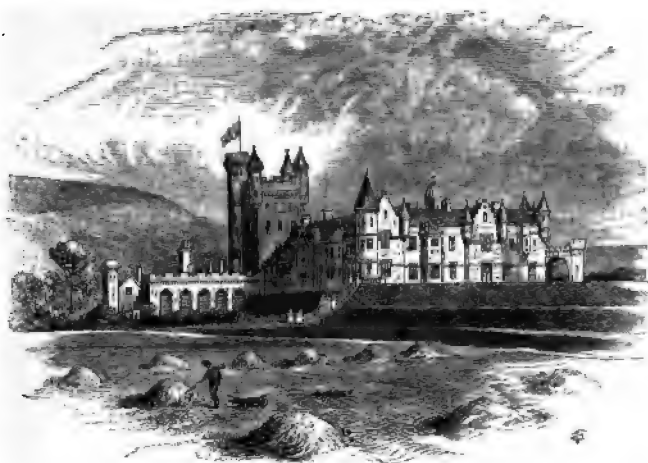


MIDDLE LIFE.

1849—1856.

YET amid all still kept his constant mind,
Not to be wearied out by toil or pain,
Or all which malice could of outrage find,
The Steadfast Prince ; on him were spent in vain
All shafts of malice—able to sustain
Not his own heart alone, but aye to speak
Strength to the fainting, courage to the weak.

TRENCH.



(Balmoral.)

CHAPTER V.

MIDDLE LIFE.—1849-1856.

EARLY in March, 1849, Prince Albert laid the foundation-stone of the Great Grimsby Docks, in the midst of a snow-storm. At the luncheon which followed he said: "I have derived an additional gratification from this visit, as it has brought me for the first time to the county of Lincoln, so celebrated for its agricultural pursuits, and showing a fine example of the energy of the national character, which has, by dint of perseverance, succeeded in transforming unhealthy swamps into the richest and most fertile soil in the kingdom." Two months after he presided

at the public Meeting of the Servants' Provident and Benevolent Society; and his speech on this occasion displayed the same kind feeling and thoughtfulness which pervaded his treatment of his own servants. "Whose heart," he asked, "would fail to sympathize with those who minister to us in all the wants of daily life, attend us in sickness, receive us upon our first appearance in this world, and even extend their cares to our mortal remains, who live under our roof, form our household, and are a part of our family?"

About this time the education of the Prince of Wales occupied much of his father's thoughts. Prince Albert's plans for his son's training bore the impress of his own high standard of moral and intellectual culture; and he appears to have been happy in his selection of instructors, and wise in his various educational arrangements. The tender care of his children, the prudent preparation of them for their future careers, the watchful regard for their best interests, not forgetting their comforts and enjoyments, were, now and always, essential features of the Prince's daily life, and commanded his intelligent and prayerful efforts.

Ireland being now in better condition, and having recovered a little from bad crops and demagogues, the Queen and the Prince resolved to pay their promised visit to it—not in full state, with the large expense which that would involve, but rather in the style of a yachting excursion. Accordingly, on August 1st, 1849, the royal pair left Osborne for a cruise to Ireland, and next evening found themselves in the Cove of Cork,

after "a not very pleasant passage." Next day they went up the river Lee to Cork, and found the streets densely crowded, and decorated with flowers and triumphal arches. This very Irish city, the Queen notes, "is not at all like an English town, and looks rather foreign. The crowd is a noisy, excitable, but very good-humoured one, running and pushing about, and laughing, talking, and shrieking. The beauty of the women is very remarkable, and struck us much; such beautiful dark eyes and hair, and such fine teeth: almost every third woman was pretty, and some remarkably so. They wear no bonnets, and generally long blue cloaks; the men are very poorly, often raggedly, dressed; and many wear blue coats and short breeches with blue stockings." Dublin was visited, and found to be "a very fine city," and the people most enthusiastic in their loyalty. Belfast was reached on August 11th; then farewell was bid to the Hibernian cities; and on the 14th, Scotchmen gave them a brilliant welcome to Glasgow. Thence they pushed on to Balmoral, and spent a happy time of quiet enjoyment in their "dear Highland home."

Here the Prince's mind was much occupied with the problem, What could be done to raise the working classes; and for this purpose he regarded the improvement of their dwellings as a first essential. At Balmoral he found the cottage accommodation to be almost Irish in its character: and here he speedily effected a change, making the small dwellings for the labourers models of convenience and comfort.

In October the Prince was greatly shocked and

tried by the sudden death of his faithful friend and helper, Mr. Anson, who had been his first Secretary, and afterwards filled the office of Privy Purse. His loss was hard to bear; but good men and true were found to occupy the vacant places: Colonel Phipps becoming Privy Purse, and Colonel Grey Secretary, to the Prince.

On the 30th of the same month the New Coal Exchange was opened by the Prince, who was accompanied by the Prince of Wales and the Princess Royal. The Queen was detained at home by an attack of chicken-pox, and was thus debarred from witnessing her children's first entry on public life. The day, though so late in the year, was a lovely one; and, as the State barge glided along "the silent way," the river's banks were crowded, and its surface nearly covered, with pleased spectators, while the autumnal sunshine lent its soft, golden touch to the picturesqueness of the scene.

It was in the summer of this same year, 1849, that the Prince propounded his views as to holding a Great Exhibition in London, and took the initiative in planning and preparing that which in 1851 achieved such a marvellous success. His idea was that it would be a good thing for every country to have an opportunity of displaying its products, natural, artistic, and industrial; of seeing what other nations could supply; of comparing notes; and thus of gaining knowledge of the world's general advance in materials and processes. The task grew upon his hands, and became a formidable addition to his already herculean

labours. But, though his health suffered under the strain, he threw his whole soul into a business for which his many accomplishments, his accurate knowledge of mechanics, and his faculty of orderly arrangement peculiarly fitted him.

In what spirit he put his shoulders to so congenial a work may be learnt from a few sentences of the speech which he delivered at a Mansion House banquet in March, 1850 :

“So man is approaching a more complete fulfilment of that great and sacred mission which he has to perform in this world. His reason being created after the image of God, he has to use it to discover the laws by which the Almighty governs His creation, and, by making these laws his standard of action, to conquer nature to his use ; himself a Divine instrument. Science discovers these laws of power, motion, and transformation ; industry applies them to the raw matter, which the earth yields us in abundance, but which becomes valuable only by knowledge. Art teaches us the immutable laws of beauty and symmetry, and gives to our productions forms in accordance to them. . . .

“I confidently hope that the first impression which the view of this vast collection will produce upon the spectator will be that of deep thankfulness to the Almighty for the blessings which He has bestowed upon us already here below ; and the second, the conviction that they can only be realised in proportion to the help which we are prepared to render each other ; therefore, only by peace, love, and ready assistance,

not only between individuals, but between the nations of the earth."

The speech from which we extract these sentences was one of much power, and its delivery produced a great effect throughout the country. Many who had hitherto been inclined to underrate the Prince's abilities and depreciate his motives, now cheerfully owned that he was a man of mark, possessed of fine perceptive and reasoning faculties, a sound judgment, and a happy talent for putting the right words in the right places. The Queen, who knew best the amount of work for the benefit of others which occupied his long days and trenched upon his hours of rest, was delighted to see that the nation at large was appraising him at his true value, and that the prejudices against him were fast fading away.

It was about this time that the Prince was urged by the Duke of Wellington to accept the office of Commander-in-Chief; but after calm consideration he declined the tempting proposition. In his final reply to the aged Duke, who, being long accustomed to command, could see no difficulties in the way of the arrangement, the Prince sets forth his position in the clearest manner. "Whilst a female Sovereign," he writes, "has a great many disadvantages in comparison with a King, yet, if she is married, and her husband understands and does his duty, her position, on the other hand, has many compensating advantages, and, in the long run, will be found even to be stronger than that of a male Sovereign. But this requires that the husband should entirely sink his *own individual*

existence in that of his wife—that he should aim at no power by himself or for himself—should shun all ostentation—assume no separate responsibility before the public, but make his position entirely a part of hers—fill up every gap which, as a woman, she would naturally leave in the exercise of her regal functions—continually and anxiously watch every part of the public business, in order to be able to advise and assist her at any moment, in any of the multifarious and difficult questions or duties brought before her, sometimes international, sometimes political, or social, or personal. As the natural head of her family, superintendent of her household, manager of her private affairs, sole *confidential* adviser in politics, and only assistant in her communications with the officers of the Government, he is, besides the husband of the Queen, the tutor of the royal children, the private Secretary of the Sovereign, and her permanent Minister.”

In this formidable list of duties we discern the high sense entertained by the Prince of the obligations of his position. He then proceeds to ask: “How far would it be consistent with this position to undertake the management and administration of a most important branch of the public service, and the individual responsibility attaching to it—becoming an executive officer of the Crown, receiving the Queen’s commands through her Secretaries of State? etc., etc.”

On May 1st, 1850, a third Prince was added to the family group at the Palace, who, being born on the old Duke’s eighty-first birthday, was called Arthur

William Prince Albert and is now known as the Duke of Edinburgh.

Just was a ~~disasterous~~ moment for the Crown and for the people. It was in the very beginning Sir Robert Peel had fallen from his horse a few days before and Prince Albert had to mourn the loss of one of the most able advisers of the Queen. After a long career as a successful party leader,—in which course he secured more victories probably than any other British statesman—the great Tisbury baronet had come to be a dispassionate judge and disinterested counsellor in all public questions. Cold and stern in manner his icy exterior concealed a warm heart and cultured tastes in art and literature, as well as in science and politics. And this Prince Albert was to be a close and lasting friendship.

The Prince's death—always to him and his a painful remembrance day a time of saddest remembrance and reflection of family life—was saddened the more by the death and mourning of the ex-King of the Swedes who after the course of an unusually long life at length found rest in the grave.

In August Scotland was again visited: and the Duke spent some of his time at the ancient castle of Edinburgh. The Prince and the foundation-stone of the Scottish National Gallery at Edinburgh, and then a week. Thence he proceeded to Balmoral, where he found that his plans for improvements were being well carried out and where he had fresh healthy surroundings to his body and mind. In the *Leaves from the Queen's Journal* we find the following

vivid account of a "salmon leistering" expedition, with its picturesque scenes and exciting incidents:

"We walked with Charles, the boys, and Vicky to the river side above the bridge, where all our tenants were assembled with poles and spears, or rather 'leisters,' for catching salmon. They all went into the river, walking up it, and then back again, poking about under all the stones to bring fish up to where the men stood with the net. It had a very pretty effect; about one hundred men wading through the river, some in kilts, with poles and spears, all very much excited. Not succeeding the first time, we went higher up, and moved to three or four different places, but did not get any salmon; one or two escaping. Albert stood on a stone, and Colonel Gordon and Lord James Murray waded about the whole time. . . . Not far from the laundry there was another trial, and here we had a great fright. In one place there was a very deep pool, into which two men very foolishly went, and one could not swim; we suddenly saw them sink, and in one moment they seemed drowning, though surrounded by people. There was a cry for help, and a general rush, including Albert, towards the spot; which frightened me so much that I grasped Lord Carlisle's arm in great agony. However, Dr. Robertson swam in and pulled the man out, and all was safely over; but it was a horrid moment. . . . Though Albert stood in the water some time he caught nothing; but the scene at this beautiful spot was exciting and picturesque in the extreme. I wished for Landseer's pencil."

William Patrick Albert, and is now known as the Duke of Connaught.

July was a disastrous month for the Crown and for the people; for at its very beginning Sir Robert Peel died, having been thrown from his horse a few days before; and Prince Albert had to mourn the loss of one of the most sage advisers of the Queen. After a long career as a successful party leader,—in which course he carried more reforms probably than any other modern statesman,—the great Tamworth baronet had, since 1846, become a dispassionate judge and disinterested counsellor on all public questions. Cold and stately in manner, his icy exterior concealed a warm heart; and kindred tastes in art and literature, as well as in morals and politics, had knit Prince Albert to him in a close and lasting friendship.

The Prince's birthday—always to him and his a specially pleasant day, a time of affectionate remembrance and outpourings of family love—was saddened this year by the death, that morning, of the ex-King of the French, who, after the storms of an unusually eventful life, at length found rest in the grave.

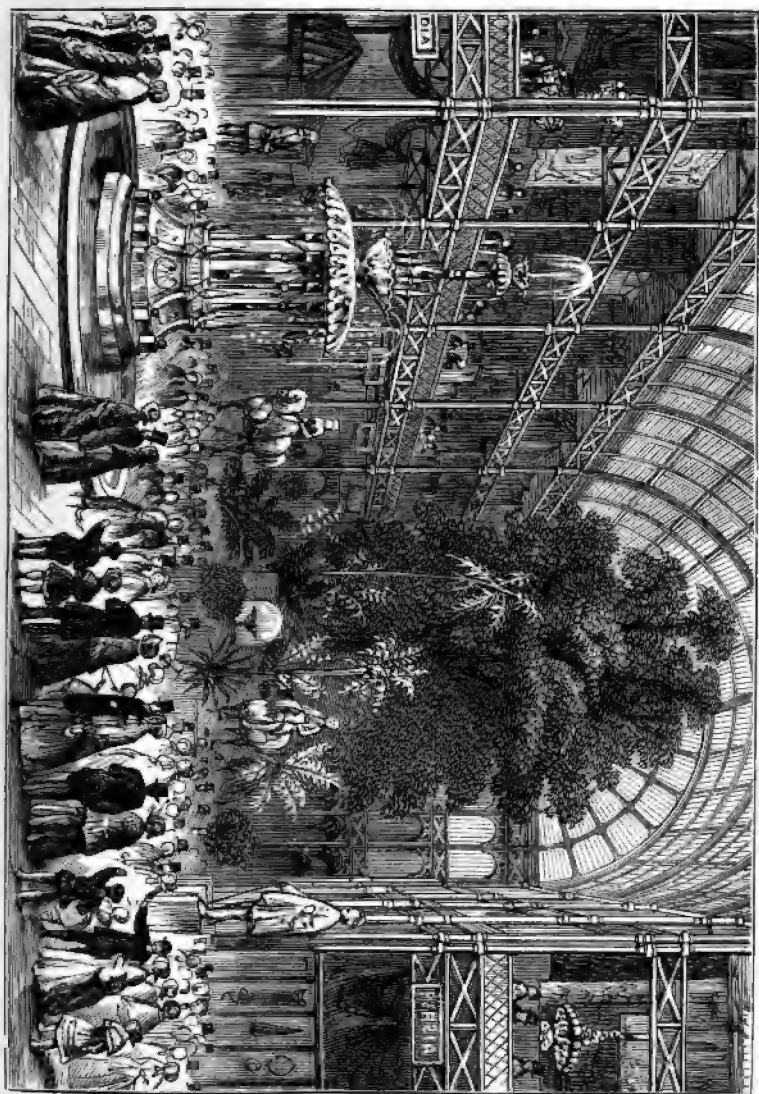
In August Scotland was again visited; and the royal party stayed for a day or two at the ancient palace of Holyrood. The Prince laid the foundation-stone of the Scottish National Gallery at Edinburgh, and made a speech. Thence he proceeded to Balmoral, where he found that his plans for improvements were being well carried out, and where he had fresh healthy employment for both body and mind. In the *Leaves* from Her Majesty's Journal we find the following

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Later in the year Prince Albert was present and spoke at the banquet given, on October 25th, by the Lord Mayor of York, and the Mayors of the chief cities and towns of the United Kingdom, to the Lord Mayor of London. On this occasion he took the opportunity of passing a fine eulogium on Sir Robert Peel.

The chief event of the Prince's life in 1851 was the opening of the Great Exhibition, for the success of which he had laboured long and well, planning, organizing, arranging, presiding at Committees, and speaking at meetings and dinners, devoting his clear intellect, fine taste, and beautiful sense of order, to the creation of that wonderful show of the World's Fair. No one who was present in Hyde Park on that bright first of May can ever forget the gay scene: first and foremost, the crowded mass of human beings, "in good humour dressed," full of bright enthusiasm, and waiting patiently to catch a glimpse of the royal pair, as they sped along the road through the dense array of their million admirers; then the brilliant palace of glass itself, with the sunshine glinting on its roof, and the pennons streaming along its outlines in the summer breeze. If it was a pretty sight externally, its interior was a very fairyland of beauty and wonder. And such was the perfection of its arrangement that no one of ordinary intelligence, having once visited and examined it, could find any after-difficulty in wending his way to all points of special interest to himself or the friends whom he might have to guide. How much of its perfect order, its grand combination of colours, its marvellous com-



(Interior of the Crystal Palace, 1851.)

pleteness, was due to Prince Albert's genius and perseverance, was never adequately understood till subsequent exhibitions, deprived of his care, demonstrated how easy it was to make a bewildering maze out of the most precious materials.

The brilliant success of the opening day raised devout emotion and gratitude in the breast of both Prince and Queen: he calmly rejoicing that all obstacles were overcome, all ill prophecies belied and forgotten, and that the nation was as one man in congratulation and triumph; she, touched to tears with the solemn beauty of the scene, proud alike of her country and of her husband, and gratefully recalling his "emphatic words" of the previous year, when he foretold that the feeling on this occasion would be "that of deep thankfulness to the Almighty for the blessings which He has bestowed upon us already here below."

Thackeray finely etched the loveliness and pathos of the scene in his beautiful "May Day Ode" which appeared in the *Times*, and which Prince Albert cut out and treasured up:

"I felt a thrill of love and awe,
To mark the different garb of each,
The changing tongue, the various speech
Together blent,—
A thrill, methinks, like his who saw
'All people dwelling upon earth,
Praising our God with solemn mirth
And one consent.'

"Behold her in her royal place;
A gentle Lady—and the hand
That sways the sceptre of this land,
How frail and weak!

Soft is the voice, and fair the face ;
She breathes Amen to prayer and hymn,—
No wonder that her eyes are dim,
And pale her cheek.

“The fountain in the basin plays,
The chanting organ echoes clear,
An awful chorus 'tis to hear,
A wondrous song !
Swell, organ, swell your trumpet blast,
March, Queen and royal pageant, march
By splendid aisle and springing arch
Of this fair Hall !

“And see ! above the fabric vast,
God's boundless heaven is bending blue,
God's peaceful sun is beaming through,
And shining over all.”

Two days after this memorable opening ceremony the Prince made a good speech at the dinner of the Royal Academy, where he was warmly received. Again, on June 16th, he delivered one of his best speeches at the third Jubilee of the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. It was a time of great agitation in the religious world. The Pope, Pio Nono, had aroused the Protestant feeling of England by the foolish bravado of his Brief for the re-establishment of Romish bishops ornamented with titles taken from the sees over which they were supposed to preside ; and when the excitement, caused by his ignoring the authority of the English Sovereign, had subsided, there was commotion in the minds of people throughout the land in connection with the proceedings of extreme parties in the

Established Church. A sentence or two from Prince Albert's speech will show how he felt on these points.

"This Society," said he, "was first chartered by that great man William the Third, the greatest Sovereign this country has to boast of; by whose sagacity and energy was closed that bloody struggle for civil and religious liberty which so long had convulsed this country, and who secured to us the inestimable advantages of our Constitution and of our Protestant faith. . . . Whilst we have to congratulate ourselves upon our state of temporal prosperity, harmony at home, and peace abroad, we cannot help deploring that the Church, whose exertions for the progress of Christianity and civilization we are to-day acknowledging, should be afflicted by internal dissensions and attacks from without. I have no fear, however, for her safety and ultimate welfare so long as she holds fast to what our ancestors gained for us at the Reformation—the Gospel, and the unfettered right of its use."

Returning from their customary sojourn in Scotland, the Queen and Prince visited Liverpool, and, though a little dismayed at its mud consequent on a wet day, were delighted with St. George's Hall. Thence they proceeded to Manchester; and in Peel Park, Salford, witnessed an extraordinary sight,—eighty-two thousand school children drawn up in beautiful array, and singing "God save the Queen!" with fine and touching effect.

The year was not to end without a new cause of annoyance and anxiety to the Queen and the Prince, in the *coup d'état* of Prince Louis Napoleon.

The next year (1852) began with rumours of war in Europe, and with an actual "little war" of our own at the Cape. Prince Albert was much occupied with plans for improving the national defences. But, in spite of all his occupations, he found time to read a few books thoroughly each year, and to "make a note of" them. A trip to Belgium in the autumn broke in pleasantly on the routine of royal life. The great home event of the year was the death of "*the Duke*," full of years and honours, and regretted sincerely by the Prince and the Queen, who described the loss as "irreparable."

Every day of these busy years found ample occupation for the Prince; and each day seemed to bring a few little extras, besides the heavy routine of correspondence, despatches, interviews. His few spare moments in the latter part of 1852 were occupied, amongst other things, with settling what should be done with the Exhibition surplus,—weighing the results of experiments with Shrapnels,—arranging the final details of the Duke of Wellington's funeral, the pattern of the car, the music to be played, etc.; while many a thoughtful or playful letter was penned to Baron Stockmar and other intimate friends.

In October the Prince was elected Master of the Trinity House, in succession to the Duke of Wellington: an office which, with Prince Albert, was no sinecure, but involved much work and many responsibilities. He soon made himself acquainted with the claims of the position, and with the sphere of the Corporation's duties, and devoted his energies and

strong practical wisdom to carrying out certain much needed reforms.

On April 7th, 1853, a fourth son was added to the now pretty large family group, and on June 28th was baptized at Buckingham Palace Chapel by the names Leopold George Duncan Albert: "Duncan" being intended by Her Majesty as a compliment to the much-loved Scottish part of her dominions. On the 21st of June the Queen and the Prince visited the new Camp at Chobham, and witnessed the manœuvres of the various brigades. Three days after he again visited the Camp; and, anxious to take an active part in military life, stayed there all night, and paid for the exposure implied in tent-life by a severe cold, which in a few days developed into the popular but unpleasant disease known as "measles." This afterwards spread nearly throughout the royal family, affecting the Queen herself and her guests from Germany,—the Crown Prince of Hanover and the Duke and Duchess of Coburg. However, the Prince and his family speedily recovered; and in August they revisited the Camp, and also reviewed the fleet at Spithead.

In the autumn another visit was made to Dublin, where an Art and Industrial Exhibition had been opened. The royal couple were much interested in this first outcome of the Great Exhibition of 1851; and they paid their respects to the generous William Dargan, at whose sole expense the Dublin building had been constructed. From Ireland they went on to Scotland; reached Balmoral on September 6th; and

on the 28th laid the foundation of the new house there. It was an interesting ceremony: the royal party walked round to the spot, preceded by Mackay, the Queen's piper; and after the Rev. Mr. Anderson had "made a very appropriate prayer," Her Majesty deftly handled the trowel and spread the mortar, struck the stone, and declared it to be duly laid. Then the "cornucopia" was placed on the stone; the Queen poured out oil and wine; and the proceedings terminated with a dinner and amusements for the workmen.

In September the little cloud arising from an absurd and long-standing dispute about the guardianship of the "Holy Places" in Palestine gave but too sure a foreshadowing of the war deluge which was about to descend on Europe. It soon became evident that the Emperor Nicholas was determined to fight Turkey, and that our Government was drifting into the storm. Prince Albert suffered from the promulgation of a report that he was using his influence with the Queen in favour of Russia and against Lord Palmerston; and he was much pained by the violent attacks made upon him by the press. It was even asserted that he had no right to advise the Queen on any public matter; as if such a husband could be prevented from expressing his opinion to his wife, and from giving her his best counsel! However, when Parliament met, at the end of January, 1854, the calumnies against him were easily disposed of, and in both Houses his right to advise and hold up the hands of the Queen was eloquently and decisively vindicated.

The Prince was now in the heyday of his strength, and his Diary shows the marvellous amount of work which he achieved, which yet was so systematized as to allow him a fair margin for lighter occupation and comparative recreation ; such as presiding over meetings of the Fine Art Commission, hearing Faraday lecture at the Royal Institution, listening to the sweet music of the Cologne Choir, attending the *soirées* of the Royal Society and of the Society of British Architects, filling the chair at the Trinity House Dinner, and delivering eight appropriate speeches. None of these avocations, however, prevented him from making himself master of every detail which concerned the Army and Navy, from summarizing the numerous despatches, or from corresponding largely and freely. When it had at length been determined to attack Sebastopol, the Prince devoted special study to the question—how the advance upon it was to be conducted—and drew up a “Memorandum” on the subject, which embodied information from all the sources then available.

In the course of the summer of 1854, Prince Albert received a pressing invitation to visit the Emperor of the French at Boulogne, in which neighbourhood he was establishing a camp of one hundred thousand soldiers. The invitation was cordially accepted, and the Prince left Osborne to make the acquaintance of the remarkable man who had so suddenly found his way to the throne of the French Empire.

The Emperor and the Prince were well pleased with other, and the kindly nature of the latter seems

to have become attached to the man for whom previously he had entertained no great liking, but whom he found to be neither so crafty nor so evil-minded a person as he had been represented. Immediately after his return home, Prince Albert dictated to Colonel Grey a long "Memorandum" which shows the freedom with which they had conversed, and the strong influence which the Prince's open, truthful bearing had exercised on Napoleon III., who, though the circumstances of his early life—his exile and long imprisonment—had led him to assume a reserved and inscrutable demeanour, could appreciate his visitor's bright intelligence and fearless outspokenness.

That the Prince's influence was powerful for good with the Emperor, who was always brooding over a motley nest of schemes, may be gathered from the encomium which the latter passed upon him when writing to the Queen, after a short visit to Osborne in 1857: "One retires from his presence better informed and better qualified for doing the right." This was, indeed, the secret of Prince Albert's power in personal intercourse with leading men: his unbending integrity and perfect candour seemed to ignore the possibility of meanness, and made men "more apt to do what was right."

On September 15th the Court had transferred its quarters to Balmoral, where the Prince found the new house roofed in, and was well satisfied with the general appearance of the building. The same day tidings were received that the allied forces had sailed from Varna for the Crimea on the 3rd, in the largest fleet

that had ploughed the sea with martial pomp since the Spanish Armada weighed its anchors. Soon the march on Sebastopol began: the Queen and the Prince were intensely interested in all the incidents of the battle of the Alma, and he diligently collected such letters and documents as would enable him to realize each feature of the scene, each act in the tremendous drama.

The battle of Balaclava, with its immortal charge of the Light Brigade, was rapidly followed by the sturdy fight of Inkermann, with its splendid heroism on the part of all ranks. Many privations succeeded; food and clothing were deficient; hospitals and nurses were wanting; and though private and royal benevolence did much to remedy the evils of neglect and mismanagement, the Prince was much distressed by the breakdown of the Commissariat and other departments, and wrote: "The present administration of the army is not to be defended: my heart bleeds to think of it." His anxiety and constant study of the subject led him at last to draw up a paper, which proved the soundness of his judgment, his capacity for reforms, and his clearness as a thinker and administrator. It is sufficient praise for it that almost all its suggestions have since been carried into effect, to the great advantage of our military arrangements.

In April, 1855, the Emperor Napoleon and the Empress Eugénie arrived at Windsor on a visit to the Queen, who but a few days before had been visited by Marie Amélie, the ex-Queen of France. It seemed like a dream that the man who, in comparative youth

and poverty, had gazed on Queen Victoria as she went for the first time to prorogue Parliament, and had been much impressed with seeing "a young person" in that position, should now come as an honoured guest, and appear as the principal figure in the brilliant throng which filled the room named in memory of his uncle's final defeat, and panelled with portraits of the statesmen and generals whose life's business it had been to hold the restless aggressor at bay. To one who had passed nearly six dreary years in the monotony of the fortress of Ham, and whose later life had been spent in the society of adventurers and sycophants, the frank, friendly bearing of Prince Albert, "every inch a man," and his free, sagacious, lively conversation, came with all the charm of freshness and goodness, and caused him to leave the atmosphere of the English Court with sincere regret.

In May the Court repaired to Osborne, there to celebrate, as usual, the Queen's birthday. Here the Prince found that the severe winter had wrought havoc among his tender plants. The sojourn in the pleasant little island could scarcely be called holiday for him; it was little more than change of scene, since the work of reading and answering innumerable letters and despatches followed him wherever he went; and his labours were varied chiefly by planning improvements upon the Osborne estate, and by excursions to Portsmouth and the Needles to inspect transports and batteries.

The summer was full of anxieties. Lord Raglan's death, preceded by a severe reverse in the Crimea,—

Lord John Russell's resignation,—scarlet fever amongst the royal children, and all the minor worries of public and private life, told heavily upon the Queen and the Prince. One special duty they had to perform, before they could claim the refreshment of their mountain home in Scotland: it was, the fulfilment of their promise to return the visit of the French Emperor. Since Henry VI. no English Sovereign had made an appearance in Paris; and the prospect of seeing a British Queen there had raised much expectation. The royal pair were well received at Boulogne, and all Paris was *en fête* when they entered that renowned city. On their return to Osborne Prince Albert was able to inform friendly enquirers that all had gone well,—no accident, no wounded feelings, no lack of enthusiasm, but every one well pleased and well behaved.

The Queen and the Prince reached Balmoral on September 7th, and found the chief part of the new house ready for occupation. "The new house," we find recorded in the *Leaves*, "is charming. . . . The view from the windows of our rooms, and from the library, drawing-room, etc., below them, of the valley of the Dee, with the mountains in the background,—which one never could see from the old house,—is quite beautiful."

The new abode was soon gladdened with tidings that Sebastopol had at length fallen. "Our delight was great; but we could hardly believe the good news, and from having so long, so anxiously expected it, one could not realize the actual fact. Albert said

they should go at once and light the bonfire which had been prepared when the false report of the fall of the town arrived last year, and had remained ever since waiting to be lit. . . . In a few minutes Albert and all the gentlemen, in every species of attire, sallied forth, followed by all the servants, and gradually by all the population of the village—keepers, gillies, workmen—up to the top of the cairn. We waited, and saw them light the bonfire, accompanied by general cheering. It blazed forth brilliantly, and we could see the numerous figures surrounding it.”

The betrothal of their eldest daughter, the Princess Royal, to Prince Frederick William of Prussia, was a cause of rejoicing to both parents in the prospect of their child's happiness; but we may well suppose that with the Prince's joy were already mingled forebodings of the parting, which, though far off, must be the result, if all went well. He at once, with characteristic love of method, added the name of his future son-in-law to his long list of correspondents; and managed to bestow an hour every evening on perfecting his daughter's education, and fitting her for her future position.

In November Prince Albert laid the first stone of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, and made an excellent speech at the banquet which followed. A few days after he went to meet the gallant King of Sardinia in London, and to bring him to Windsor Castle; and, after the royal visitor had seen the principal sights of Woolwich, Portsmouth, and the metropolis, he accompanied him, early on a bitterly

cold morning, through heavy snow, to Folkestone; and then proceeded to Shorncliffe, to present colours to two of the regiments of the Royal German Legion, who were about to embark for the Crimea.

The early part of 1856 was occupied chiefly with discussions about the peace negotiations with Russia, which came to a successful termination in March, when the treaty was settled and signed, and Lord Palmerston received the blue ribbon of the Order of the Garter. In April the Queen and the Prince visited the hospitals at Chatham, and Her Majesty cheered the wounded soldiers by her kind words and practical interest in the arrangements for their comfort. Two days afterwards they went to Aldershot, and inspected the troops in the newly-completed camp; thence to Portsmouth, to review two hundred and forty ships of war at Spithead—a grand array, of which the illustrious Italian statesman, Count Cavour, was an interested spectator. In July the Queen reviewed the Crimean veterans at Aldershot, and gave them hearty welcome. "I thank God," she said to them, "that your dangers are over, while the glory of your deeds remains." Next day the Guards, just returned from their long campaign, were received with all honour in Hyde Park, the sunshine adding a brilliance to the scene which the former ceremony had lacked.

The autumn visit to Balmoral was not favoured with much fine weather; mist, rain, snow, and bitter cold, detracted slightly from the pleasure of the many excursions of the Queen and Prince and

their friends. The Prince, however, managed to get plenty of deer-stalking, and the fresh air and outdoor life no doubt repaired in some measure his exhausted frame. Among the most honoured guests, this year, was Miss Florence Nightingale, whose modest bearing charmed the royal pair, while they listened with eager interest to her description of the defects of our military hospital system, and to her suggestions for its reform. In November the worthy Stockmar visited, for the last time, his old friends at Windsor Castle; and found them in deep grief at the loss of the Queen's half-brother, Prince Leiningen.

With this year closes what may be designated the Crimean period of the Prince's life,—a period marked with great anxieties, which told heavily on his somewhat delicate frame, yet a period of much happiness to him, impressed as he was with the consciousness that he had been of no small use to the nation in its darkest hours, when some of its boldest spirits had begun to despair of their country. Growing up around him was a fine group of daughters and sons, in whose education and occupations, ailments and amusements, he took unwearying interest, and whose love he secured by his constant fatherly care and tender affection. What he was to the Queen is best expressed in her own unstudied tribute, written at Balmoral in October, 1856, and fittingly preserved in the *Leaves from the Journal*: "Every year my heart becomes more fixed in this dear paradise; and so much more so now, that *all* has become my dear Albert's

own creation, own work, own building, own laying out as at Osborne; and his great taste, and the impress of his dear hand, have been stamped everywhere."



LATER YEARS.

1857—1861

NEVER hasting, never resting,
With a firm and joyous heart,
Ever onward slowly tending,
Acting aye a brave man's part ;
With a high and holy purpose
Doing all thou hast to do ;
Seeking ever man's upraising,
With the highest end in view.

ANON.



(Model House.)

CHAPTER VI.

LATER YEARS.—1857-1861.

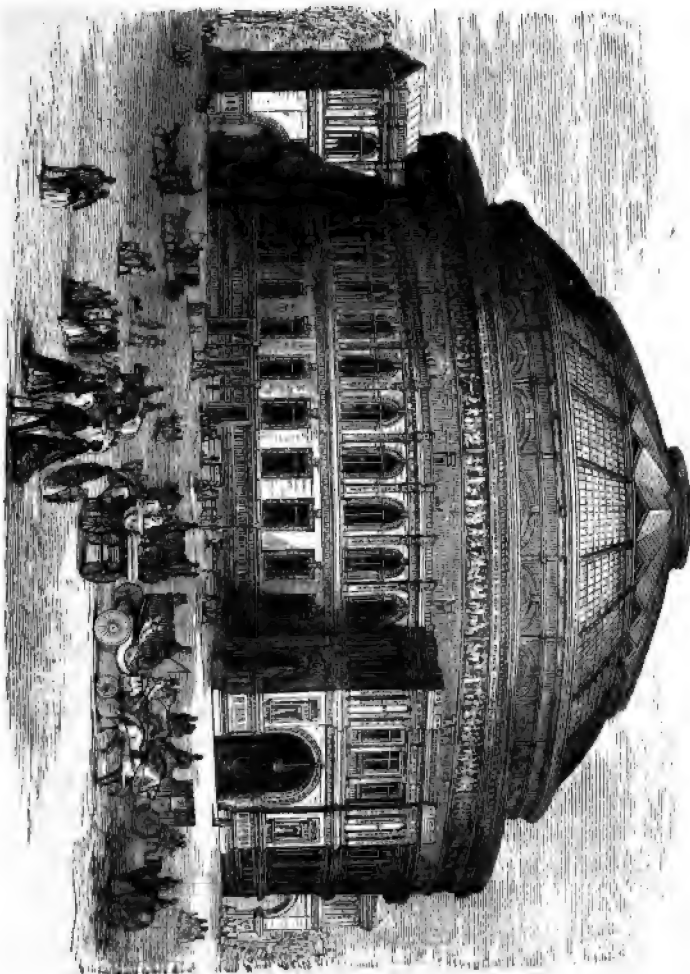
PRINCE ALBERT had a strong desire to improve the dwellings of the working classes; and besides furnishing a personal example and a material model to landlords in his erections on the royal estates at Osborne and Balmoral, he did his best to call public attention to the construction of improved lodging-houses in London. Thanks to the earnest labours of the Prince and other philanthropists, great things have

since been done to meet the wants of the City poor, ejected by sweeping "improvements ;" but much more remains to be accomplished before the evils of overcrowding can be abated, and reasonable hopes entertained of proper provision being made for the lower classes in the great city.

Another subject to which Prince Albert gave ready and earnest attention—was the refreshment and amusement of the people. He saw how squalid homes and wretched surroundings drove men too often to seek warmth and change at the public-house ; and he felt that something much simpler than Reading-rooms and Institutes was required for the classes whom he wished to benefit,—something which should possess brightness and attractiveness without any drawbacks. Many were the suggestions which the Prince made to those who were devoting themselves to carrying out schemes of amelioration ; and if all his shrewd thoughts did not prove of equal value, when tested by experience, they at least showed the thoroughness with which he had studied this topic, in common with every other which he thought bore on the well-being of the people.

Another little daughter—the ninth child of the royal pair—was born on April 14th, 1857 ; and was named Beatrice Mary Victoria Feodore.

On May 5th, the Prince visited Manchester, and opened the Art Treasures' Exhibition there. Next morning he attended the unveiling of a statue of the Queen in the Peel Park, at Salford ; and journeyed back to Buckingham Palace in time to assist Her Majesty in considering the draft submitted to her for her



(The Albert Hall.)

Speech to be delivered in Parliament next day by the Lord Chancellor. In June he presided at the Conference on National Education, and made a speech full of sound philosophy and devout thought.

A few days later the Queen conferred on her husband the title of "Prince Consort" by letters patent; so that he was now *legally* possessed of a designation to which he had long had a right, and which had been very generally applied to him.

In July the Prince paid a brief visit to Brussels, to witness the marriage of the beautiful Princess Charlotte to his friend the Archduke Maximilian of Austria, afterwards the unfortunate Emperor of Mexico. Early in the next month the French Emperor and Empress steamed over to Osborne, and enjoyed a few days of pleasant intercourse with the Queen and Prince. In August, also, the Queen and the Prince, with six of the royal children, ran over to Cherbourg for a day or two, and were much impressed with the great works of defence which the Emperor was constructing there.

The autumn was rendered very sombre by the bad news from India—the spread of the Mutiny, the massacre of Cawnpore, and the siege of the Lucknow garrison by Nana Sahib. It was not till after the return of the Court from Balmoral to Windsor that the welcome report arrived of the capture of Delhi and the brilliant victories of Havelock. Early in December Prince Albert's sensitive, affectionate nature received a severe shock in the sudden death of his cousin the Duchess of Nemours at Claremont. She

had from infancy been his playmate and intimate friend, and he felt her early removal very deeply.

The new year—1858—brought with it new hopes and cares. Foremost was the gap now about to be made in the hitherto unbroken family circle by the marriage of the Princess Royal, which was to take place on the 25th of January, and the approach of which filled Buckingham Palace with more Princes and Princesses than it could comfortably contain. It was a time of excitement for all parties, and of mixed pleasure and pain for the royal parents, who, though happy that their eldest-born should marry the man who had won, and was worthy of her love, yet felt that her departure from the home of which she had formed such an integral part would tear away a piece of their hearts. All passed off well; and the pangs of parting, though severe, were bravely borne. Prince Albert soothed the wound he felt by writing to his beloved child letters which breathe the tenderest parental love, and are full of cheerful advice and encouragement.

In May the Prince took a trip, which had, in prospect, afforded him much pleasure. He was to have a Whitsuntide holiday and to run over to his former home at Coburg. On arriving at the dear old place he found many changes. Thence he proceeded to Gotha, and finally to Babelsberg, where he spent a few days with his daughter and her husband.

It was a hot summer, but the heat did not deter the Queen and the Prince from paying a visit to Birmingham, and becoming, for the time, the guests of Lord

Leigh at Stoneleigh Abbey. They were delighted with the lovely scenery surrounding that stately seat, and with their reception in the sultry but loyal streets of the town of hardware. In August they went in state to Cherbourg, having been pressed by Napoleon III. to visit that port during the *fêtes* that were to take place in celebration of the completion of the great works there; and believing that their acceptance of his invitation would tend to promote peace and good-will between the two nations. The splendour of their reception was a little marred for the Prince by the nervous consciousness of having to make a speech. This was always a sore trial to him, productive generally of a severe headache. However, all went well, and he made a thankful record in his Diary. Prince Albert thought that the visit and interviews must have done good, although he was conscious of a change in the Emperor.

Shortly afterwards, the Queen and Prince went to Germany, to see their married daughter. On their way to Babelsberg they were greatly distressed by receiving tidings of the sudden death of Prince Albert's valet, Cart, who had been with him from his seventh year, and was an invaluable servant and faithful friend. The meeting with the young Princess compensated for the weariness and heat of their journey, and they spent several pleasant days in visiting palaces and museums, and enjoying at intervals the quiet of Babelsberg.

In September Leeds had to be visited, in order that the Queen might open the noble Town Hall, of which

the citizens of the wool metropolis are justly proud. Her Majesty was delighted with the enthusiasm of the half million of hearty West Riding men who lined the streets; and the Town Hall was greatly admired, being then in the freshness of its unsmoked masonry. From Leeds they travelled on to Edinburgh, and thence to Balmoral, where the peaceful shade of the forests and the fresh mountain air were doubly welcome after the heat and excitement of the last few weeks.

In December the Prince had an attack of illness, of a type which had latterly become familiar to him, and which was probably induced by undue fatigue. Of a highly sensitive make, his weak stomach tried by too severe desk-work, his brain harassed by the constant anxiety consequent on the observation of what he rightly called "the great Continental policy of intrigue," he began to suffer from frequent weariness, which was hidden from those about him by his cheerful readiness and conscientious energy in fulfilling the whole round of duty.

The year 1859 opened with the sound of a martial note, in the few words addressed by the Emperor Napoleon to the Austrian ambassador on New Year's Day: a note which caused the funds to sink on every Exchange and Bourse in Europe, and paralysed trade and commerce in France itself. Of late Russia had become the firm friend of the French empire; and the striking spectacle was now presented of two despotic powers concluding an alliance which was to bestow freedom on countries not under their own sway.

Prince Albert, like England at large, would have rejoiced to see Italy emancipated from the heavy yoke of Austria, as well as from the galling chains of the minor despots of that classic land; but he distrusted the liberators themselves, especially the French Emperor, whom he now recognised in his true character as "a conspirator born and bred."

From public affairs and the troubles of the uneasy world, the Prince turned ever and anon to the domestic life of the palace and to its peaceful events, in which he took such a fatherly interest. Amongst other matters he succeeded in introducing an abridged liturgy for daily use in the Queen's private chapels, in lieu of the ordinary lengthy service. Then the Princess Alice had to be "confirmed." And in May the Princess Frederick William—Princess Royal of England—came from Berlin on a brief visit to Osborne, and cheered her parents with her bright presence. In the pretty ways and quaint sayings of his youngest daughter, the Princess Beatrice, he took great interest and delight. Many a passage might be quoted from letters and journals to show how thorough was his care for his children; what pains he took to secure for them educational advantages adequate to their princely station; how fondly proud he was to see their faculties improve by exercise, and to watch their higher self developing in moral beauty; how pleased to treasure up their childish sayings and more mature utterances. Well might one of them speak thus of him: "In no relation of life did the goodness and greatness of his

character appear more than in the management of his children. The most judicious, impartial, and loving of fathers, he was at once the friend and master, ever by his example enforcing the precepts he sought to instil." (Introduction to *Speeches and Addresses*.)

The shyness which seems to have been the only defect of his noble nature—if *defect* it can be called, and not rather *virtue*, in this age of brazen self-assertion—disappeared entirely in his happy home-circle; and, like many another great man, his high qualities shone to the full as brightly amid the freedom of domestic life as when they flashed forth to meet the call of some sudden emergency.

The Prince's September holidays in the Highlands were this year broken in upon by his having to preside over the Meeting of the British Association at Aberdeen, and to deliver an Inaugural Address. "I felt very low-spirited," writes the Queen (*Leaves*, under date "September 14th, 1859"), "at my dearest Albert having to leave at one o'clock for Aberdeen. . . . So sad not to find my darling husband at home." But that night came a telegram announcing that "Albert's reception was admirable, and that all was going off as well as possible;" and next evening he himself arrived at Balmoral, and the record is that "all had gone off most admirably; he had seen many learned people; all were delighted with his speech." And well might the *savants* at Aberdeen be delighted with the speech, for it was an excellent composition, and set forth with unusual force and clearness the

proper field of science and the special objects of the British Association. A week later the "philosophers" were entertained at a *fête* at Balmoral; and the Queen was gratified by hearing, from some of the most eminent of them, what good her husband's speech had done, and what satisfaction it had given.

Late in October the Prince was affected with a chill, caused by the severe weather operating on his susceptible frame; and for a week he was unable to leave his room. When he gave his friend Stockmar an account of this attack of illness, the sage old Baron was much disquieted about it, and wrote him a letter inculcating the necessity of thoughtful care about his health, and lamenting that the Prince's eminent position in a measure precluded him from the repose and careful nursing which are so essential to convalescence and restoration. No doubt this is the secret of the fatality which so often attends the illnesses—at first seemingly slight—of royal and princely personages; and the man of low degree, who can command perfect quiet and the unbought tendance of loving hands, has herein the advantage of the noble, and should foster in his heart of hearts corresponding content and thankfulness.

The full restoration of the Prince to health and good spirits was much helped by the welcome presence, for a few weeks, of his daughter, the Princess Royal, with her husband. He was cheered and delighted with her fresh and pleasing company, and gratified to find that, with fine womanly development of nature and mind, she still retained the pure, childish heart. "Of

such indeed," wrote the happy father, "is the kingdom of heaven." The old year ended with many anxieties, much work, a delicate state of health, yet with "peaceful and cheerful" Christmas celebrations, and hopeful, trustful glances into the coming year.

The year 1860 was remarkable as the year of Garibaldi's glorious, daring and brilliant success in Italy and Sicily, with which all England sympathized, excepting a few bigoted adherents of the Papacy, who saw ruin to their cause in the downfall of that devoted son of the Church, the King of Naples.

At home the year was specially notable for the rise of the volunteer force,—the national rejoinder to the designs which the French Emperor and his fiery fighting-men were supposed to entertain with regard to this country. Prince Albert pursued the even tenour of his way, achieving his customary amount of work, and throwing as much heart and unflagging energy into all he did, as if he knew that his career was nearly at an end, and was determined to work while it was day.

In July the Prince made a brilliant speech at the opening of the International Statistical Congress; shedding light and beauty upon what is sometimes regarded as a dull and ugly form of scientific labour, and answering with shrewdness and force the objection that statistical studies lead necessarily to Pantheism and fatalism. "Is the power of God destroyed or diminished," he asked, "by the discovery of the fact that the earth requires three hundred and sixty-five revolutions upon its own axis to every revolution

round the sun, giving us so many days to our year, and that the moon changes thirteen times during that period?" "Or is a man less a free agent because it has been ascertained that a generation lasts about thirty years; that there are annually posted at the Post Offices the same number of letters on which the writer had forgotten to place any address?" etc. "It is the essence of the statistical science, that it only makes apparent general laws, but that these laws are inapplicable to any special case; that therefore what is proved to be law in general is uncertain in particular. Herein lies the real refutation also of the first objection; and thus is the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator manifested, showing how the Almighty has established the physical and moral world on unchangeable laws, conformable to His eternal nature, while He has allowed to the individual the freest and fullest use of his faculties, vindicating, at the same time, the majesty of His laws by their remaining unaffected by individual self-determination."

This speech is the last one reported in that choice little book, *The Principal Speeches and Addresses of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort*,—a book which has intense and lasting interest for every student of home politics and history. It fittingly concludes with these words, devoutly uttered by the princely orator: "May He, who has implanted in our hearts a craving after the discovery of truth, and given us our reasoning faculties to the end that we should use them for this discovery, sanctify our efforts and bless them in their results!"

As the summer advanced, various family events claimed the Prince's attention. The birth of a granddaughter at Berlin; the dawn of a tender attachment between Prince Louis of Hesse and the Princess Alice; the departure of the Prince of Wales to Canada and the States, and of Prince Alfred to the Cape of Good Hope, and their enthusiastic reception everywhere,—were occasions of much joyous emotion to him.

The autumn brought the customary adjournment to Scotland; and the stay at Balmoral was this year diversified by what Her Majesty, in the *Leaves* from her Journal, designates the "first great expedition." This was a journey *incog.* to Glen Fishie and Grantown; and the Queen seems to have immensely enjoyed the primitive modes of travelling, the *al fresco* or inn-parlour meals, and the scanty accommodation incident to this attempt at "roughing it in the bush." Returned home in safety, she records: "What a delightful, successful expedition! Dear Lady Churchill was, as usual, thoroughly amiable, cheerful, and ready to do everything. Both she and the General seemed entirely to enjoy it, and enter into it, and so I am sure did our people. To my dear Albert do we owe it, for he always thought it would be delightful, having gone on many similar expeditions in former days himself. He enjoyed it very much. I fear I have but poorly recounted this very amusing and never-to-be-forgotten expedition, which will always be remembered with delight."

One of the attendants on this occasion was John

Grant, whom the Journal describes as "discreet, careful, intelligent, attentive, ever ready to do what is wanted." Grant was a great favourite with Prince Albert; and on the death of this faithful servant, in November, 1879, Her Majesty, with that thoughtful kindness which endears her to all her subjects, delayed her journey southward for three or four days, "in order to be able to pay the last mark of respect to the memory of one who was much valued by the Prince and the royal family, and whose death the Queen sincerely regrets."

In September the Queen and the Prince, with the Princess Alice, paid a visit to Coburg,—a trip to which Prince Albert had been long looking forward with pleasant anticipation. On their way through Belgium the mournful news met them that the Prince's step-mother, the Dowager Duchess of Coburg, had departed this life. The Prince was much affected by this sad and unexpected event. But, on reaching Coburg, and being cheered by the presence of his daughter the Princess Frederick William, and her husband, he recovered from the shock and began to enter into the enjoyment afforded by another visit to the exquisite scenery of his youth in company with the Queen, who felt intense pleasure in surveying the beauties of such a landscape with such a companion and guide.

The first of October was a memorable day for the Prince and the Queen. The former, who had been out shooting, was returning towards Coburg, when the four horses of his carriage took fright and galloped away, till they approached a bar at the side of

the railway line. Seeing a collision to be inevitable, the Prince leapt out and escaped with some bruises and cuts; but the coachman, who kept to his box, was severely hurt, and one of the horses was killed. Her Majesty was greatly moved by the peril which her husband had undergone; and, grateful beyond expression for this providential escape of one so dear to her, she could not rest till she had expressed her thankfulness in a tangible form. The result was the foundation of a charity at Coburg, called the *Victoria-Stift*, from which, on the 1st of October in each year, the anniversary of the Prince's escape, distribution of money is made to "young men and women of exemplary character, belonging to the humbler ranks of life:" an institution which bears good fruit, as well in keeping the beloved Prince's memory before his countrymen as in inciting them to maintain a high standard of character.

Christmas was happily spent at Windsor, where the royal couple were surrounded by a fair group of sons and daughters; none being absent but the Princess Royal, who had now become the centre of another bright home circle at Berlin.

The year 1861 opened with forebodings of civil war in America, which, a few months later, were unhappily realized.

The month of March was marked by a severe loss in the death of the Queen's mother, the Duchess of Kent: a lady remarkable for her handsome features, loving disposition, and unimpeachable conduct under very trying circumstances. Left a widow a few

months after the birth of the little daughter who had such an illustrious future before her, she brought up the young Princess with a tender care and a wise thoughtfulness which had their full reward in the undying affection of her child, and in the thankful appreciation of the nation to whom "Victoria" was to become such a welcome and honoured name. To the Queen this was the first great bereavement, the first overpowering sorrow of her life. Yet the blow was softened by being shared with a still dearer relative, one who, entering fully into the partnership of her grief, in no small degree lightened her sorrow.

In May the Queen's sanction was announced in both Houses of Parliament as having been given to the proposed marriage between the Princess Alice and Prince Louis of Hesse-Darmstadt. It was an alliance of pure affection; and although Prince Albert did not live to see it celebrated, he was gratified by the happy omens afforded by the disposition, character, and accomplishments of the young couple.

On the 5th of June the Prince took part in the opening of the Royal Horticultural Gardens. It was the last public ceremonial in London at which he was to be present: the day was dark and showery, and his face was observed to look pale and worn.

The year passed on with the average sum of business, activity, public cares, and home enjoyment. It was diversified by a tour in Ireland, in the month of August; when the Killarney Lakes were visited, and the royal party were "enchanted with the extreme beauty of the scenery."

In September, Scotland was revisited, and the pleasant expeditions were resumed into the deep, still, romantic country within easy reach of Balmoral. One night the Queen's party put up at "a quiet little inn" at Fettercairn, where they had "a nice, clean, good dinner;" after which they sallied forth in the bright moonlight and traversed the village, where "not a creature moved"; "sat till half-past ten working, and Albert reading, and then retired to rest." A traveller arriving late at night was with some difficulty kept from pushing his way into the dining-room, as being the "commercial traveller's" proper place by prescriptive right.

It was on this expedition that Prince Albert, stopping behind with Grant, his faithful attendant, to give him directions about some planting in Glen Muick, said to him, "You and I may be dead and gone before that." "In less than three months, alas!" writes Her Majesty, "his words were verified as regards himself. He was ever cheerful, but *ever ready and prepared*."

On a subsequent expedition in October they met with cold, wet, windy weather; and though they found an inn large enough to accommodate the whole party, "unfortunately there was scarcely anything to eat, and there was only tea, and two miserable starved Highland chickens, without any potatoes; no pudding, and no *fun*." The maids and men-servants below were still worse off; for "they had only the remnants of our two starved chickens." Yet the pleasures of this uncourtlike, adventurous travel far exceeded its pains and privations; and the Queen

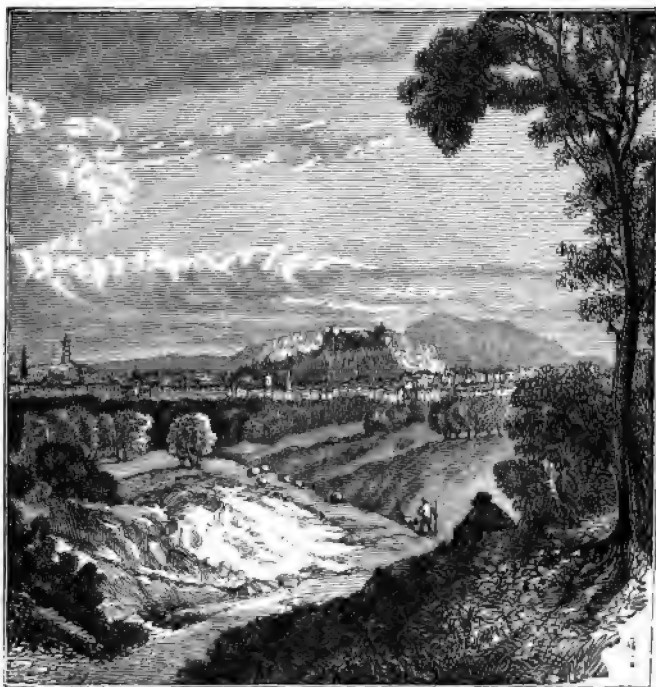
notes in her Journal that "this was the pleasantest and most enjoyable expedition I *ever* made; and the recollection of it will always be most agreeable to me and increase my wish to make more. . . . Have enjoyed nothing as much, or indeed felt so much cheered by anything, since my great sorrow,"—the death of the Duchess of Kent.

The last expedition was begun on October 16th, 1861, on "a most beautiful morning. Not a cloud was on the bright blue sky, and it was perfectly calm. There had been a sharp frost, which lay on parts of the grass, and the mountains were beautifully lit up, with those very blue shades on them, like the bloom on a plum." All was bright and lovely, and everything seemed to contribute to invest with a brilliant halo this last of a series of family excursions that were never to return in their completeness, but the retrospect of which was often to raise mingled memories of pleasure and sadness in the breasts of the survivors of that high-spirited party. The last of those pleasant *Leaves* to which we have made frequent reference gives this concluding sentence: "The moon rose and shone most beautifully, and we returned at twenty minutes to seven o'clock, much pleased and interested with this delightful expedition. Alas! I fear our *last* great one."

So it proved in reality, though probably the foreboding had reference, at the time, simply to that particular holiday season.

On the way southward from Balmoral, the Prince laid the foundation-stones of the new Post Office and

the Industrial Museum at Edinburgh. For some days after his return to Windsor all went well. He busied himself with his usual employments; made arrangements for the future household of the Princess Alice



(Edinburgh.)

and for the journey of Prince Leopold to Cannes; inspected the alterations at Buckingham Palace and Marlborough House, and the building operations at Wellington College and for the Great Exhibition of 1862.

Early in November came the sad news from Lisbon that Prince Ferdinand, brother of the King of Portugal, had died of typhoid fever; and a few days later, that the young monarch himself, to whom Prince Albert was deeply attached, had succumbed to the same disease. This was a severe shock to the Prince, whose system was now enfeebled by a long course of overwork, and was rendered specially susceptible by a succession of sleepless nights.

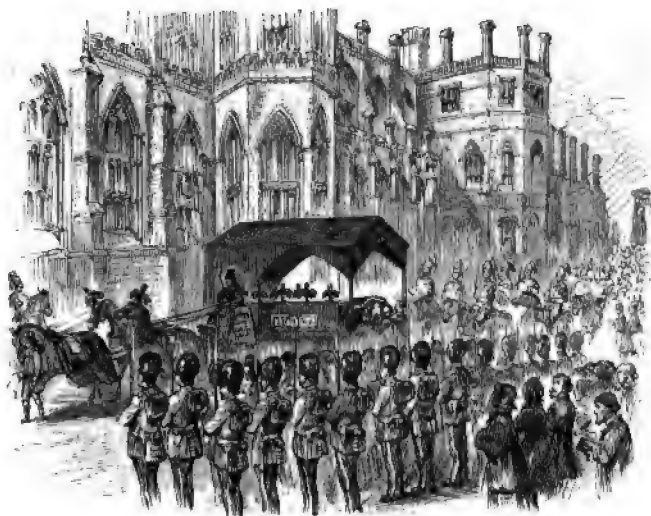


ILLNESS AND DEATH.

1861.

WHEN the last flush had faded from the west,
When the last streak of golden light was gone,
They looked, but he had entered on his rest ;
He too his haven of repose had won ;
Leaving this truth to be gainsaid by none,
That what the legend on his shield did say,
That well his life had proved—*Le bien me platt.*

TRENCH.



(The Funeral Procession at St. George's Chapel.)

CHAPTER VII.

ILLNESS AND DEATH.—1861.

IT was a notable element in Prince Albert's character, that the prospect of death affected him with no terror. Life with him was still in its prime; he liked both its hard work and its innocent recreations; and he had intense enjoyment in the sweet bondage of family ties and the firm attachments of loyal friendship. But he did not suffer from that painfully strong

lar, stating that the Prince Consort had been confined to his apartments by a feverish cold and pains in the limbs. The announcement did not strike any premonitory alarm into the mind of the public. The Prince was thought to be in the full vigour of manhood; his *physique* seemed robust and healthy: accordingly his indisposition was supposed to be simply a severe cold. On the 11th a regular bulletin was issued announcing that Prince Albert was suffering from fever, which, though unaccompanied by unfavourable symptoms, was likely to continue some little time. Early on Sunday, the 15th, however, just after midnight, the solemn, unwonted voice of the great bell of St. Paul's was heard booming through the deathlike stillness which enwrapt the metropolis, and conveyed to thousands of watchers and wakers the sad intelligence that a Prince—the beloved Prince Consort—had passed away thus soon and unexpectedly.

As the Sabbath morning slowly dawned, the mournful news spread, and with it a gloom and depression which affected men and women of every class. From the pulpit in church and chapel came ready, unaffected tributes to the memory of him who had been summoned away at a late hour on the previous evening; and indoors and out of doors, everywhere throughout the great city, there was deep lament that “a Prince and a great man was fallen.” The shock was a severe one to persons of all ranks and opinions; and after the fresh feeling of grievous, irreparable loss the people began to blame themselves that they had so inadequately prized one whose whole life was an em-

bodiment of purity and practical goodness. The same sentiment prevailed throughout the country, and, when the first burst of sorrow had moderated, led to consultation and determination as to what should be done to perpetuate the memory and enforce the example of one who was both a good man amongst Princes, and a Prince amongst good men; and to-day many an English town is adorned with noble monuments to him whose best memorial is in the unstained page of history which records his career, and in the hearts of the people of the land of his adoption.

During his last illness it need scarcely be said that Her Majesty, oppressed though she was by a double weight of cares, was unremitting in her attention to him whom she loved with deep and fervent affection. His second daughter, also, the amiable and accomplished Princess Alice,—a daughter fully worthy of such a sire, —nursed him with admirable constancy and devotion, and the highest medical science exhausted its resources in the attempt to save a life so precious to the Queen, to his family, and to the nation at large. One of his physicians is reported to have said to him, soon after his illness began, “Your Royal Highness will be better in a few days,” when the Prince replied, “I am sure this illness will be fatal, but I am not afraid.” Leaving him, but returning to him immediately, the anxious doctor rejoined: “I most sincerely hope Your Royal Highness will not fulfil your own prediction;” and the Prince’s answer was, that he doubted the likelihood of his recovery, and that if he now only trusted in outward

things he should be miserable indeed; "but I have made my peace with heaven."

When on his death-bed, the Prince often repeated portions of the well-known hymn which has expressed in its familiar language the trustful pleadings of millions:

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me!
Let me hide myself in Thee."

The faith and hope which had animated and cheered his life were well expressed in the lines of old Nicholas Hermann, which were sung at the Prince's funeral, in St. George's Chapel, Windsor:

"I shall not in the grave remain,
Since Thou death's bonds hast sever'd;
By hope with Thee to rise again,
From fear of death deliver'd.
I'll come to Thee, where'er Thou art,
Live with Thee, from Thee never part;
Therefore to die is rapture."

His earthly remains rest in the Royal Mausoleum at Frogmore. In the centre of that marvellous expression of conjugal love and right regal munificence,—where marble and gold, gems and paintings, combine in one grand memorial tribute,—rises the sarcophagus of the Prince, bearing the following inscription:

FRANCIS ALBERT AUGUSTUS CHARLES EMMANUEL,
Duke of Saxony, and Prince of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha,
Prince Consort:
Second Son of Ernest the First,
Reigning Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha;
Born at Rosenau, near Coburg, Aug. 26th, 1819;
Married Feb. 10th, 1840, to Victoria,
Queen of Great Britain and Ireland;
Died at Windsor, Dec. 14th, 1861.



(The Mausoleum, Interior.)

1



(The Mausoleum, Exterior.)

And in the Royal Albert Memorial Chapel at Windsor Castle, carved round another beautiful sarcophagus, is a similar but briefer inscription :

ALBERT, the Prince Consort, born August xxvi. MDCCXCIX ;
died December xiv. MDCCCLXI.

Buried in the Royal Mausoleum at Frogmore.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course."

Amongst the many grand monuments erected by the people of England to the Prince the chief is the Albert Memorial at Kensington, with its noble dimen-

sions, varied and valuable material, and appropriate statuary; at once an adornment to the great city and a national memento of a great man.

How the heart-broken Queen mourned the loss of him whom she loved with all the warmth of a woman's heart is written in many years of our island story. Always known as tender-hearted and kind, her great bereavement has but served to deepen her sympathy with all her subjects, high or low, when suffering from calamity. We may safely affirm that her widowed life, though for herself one long period of separation and mental suffering, has endeared her to all her people, and insured for her such a wide-spread return of love and regard as has fallen to the lot of no other sovereign. To the royal children the loss was also great. Fortunately their training had been careful and admirable; and their aim has been to do honour to the memory of their beloved father, not merely by presenting those exquisite mosaics which record his virtues in the Memorial Chapel at Windsor, but also by acting well their various parts in life.

There were two specially remarkable points in the character of the Prince, which call for a few closing remarks.

The first is, the *thoroughness* with which he accomplished everything that he set himself to do. Yet there was no appearance of bustle; none of that self-proclamation which clings to some busy men, and which seems to be always crying, "Look at what I get through! Observe how much
" On the contrary, a keen observer—



(Memorial Chapel, Interior.)

his friend and correspondent, Baron Stockmar—seems for a time, on their first acquaintance, to have set him down as a *nonchalant*, easy-going Prince, somewhat changeable in his purposes and pursuits. This was a temporary and absurdly erroneous estimate, arising from the ease with which Prince Albert worked, the happy grace with which constant cultivation of art and science invested all his movements, and the

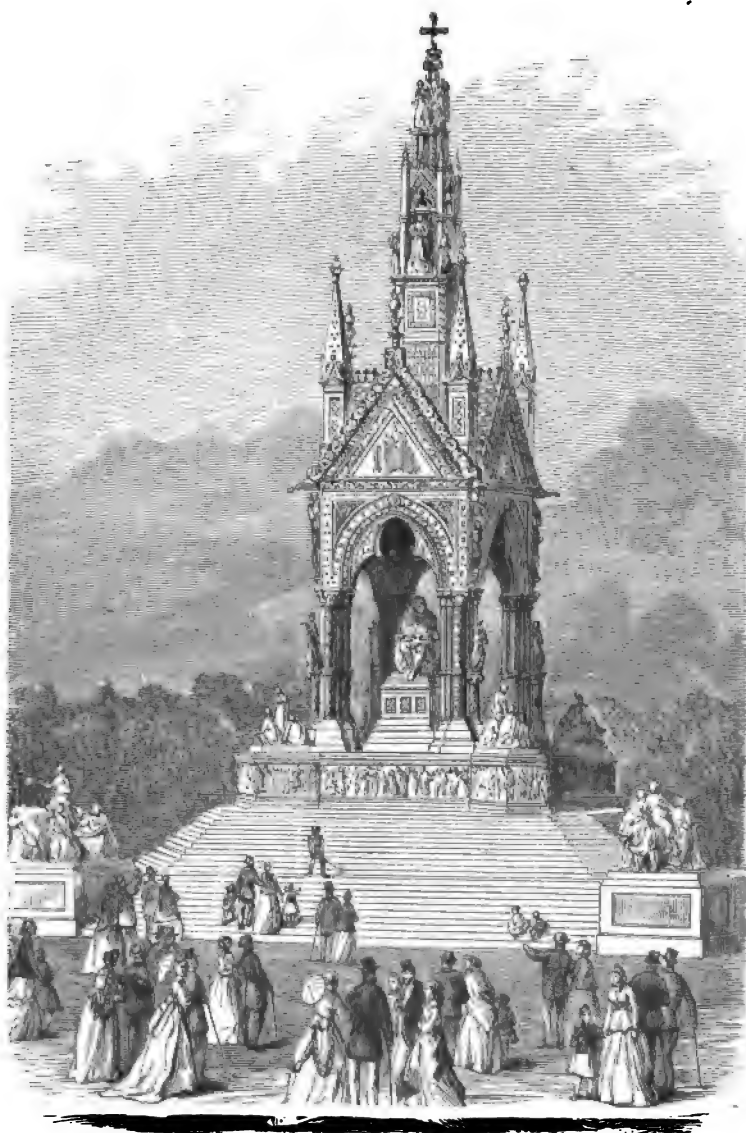


(Memorial Chapel, Exterior.)

delight which he found in many and varied occupations. He was not content till he became a thorough musician, a thorough artist, and, when raised to be the partner of a throne, a thorough statesman. Indeed, it is to this very thoroughness, applied to a wide world of operations, that Sir Arthur Helps, in the beautiful sketch prefixed to the Prince's *Speeches*, attributes his early exhaustion and death.

The grand secret of this thoroughness was the other leading characteristic,—his deep, unpretending *piety*. Without the peace which accompanied his unwavering trust in God, and which pervaded his whole being, he could never have effected with ease and undisturbed concentration of power the great things which he accomplished, in the perfecting of his own education, in his adaptation of himself to an elevated and exposed position in a foreign country, in his invaluable services to his beloved consort the Queen, and in his manifold contributions to popular advancement and enjoyment. No doubt he, like other men, had his inner conflicts; but so completely was he enabled to master whatever tendencies he had to evil, that, in his case as in that of Socrates, it was difficult for bystanders and close observers to believe that such conflicts could ever have taken place in the breast of one whose very glance seemed to daunt vice from approaching the charmed circle of which he was the centre. Untroubled by the evil passions which spoil so many princely lives, he was free to devote his energies fully to the work which every day brought; yet he was never unmindful that this world is not the proper goal of the aspirations of peasant or prince, and he so lived here as to be, to use the Queen's words, "ever ready and prepared" for the great transition.

Many instances might be quoted to show how thoroughly the Prince's religion pervaded his life. Without pretension or pharisaic show, he was equally without fear or false shame in the avowal of that faith which he had openly confessed in his youth.



Albert Memorial, Kensington Gardens.



And it is remarkable that though he had been brought up in a form of Lutheranism which retained little of the life and warmth of the great Reformer's doctrine, yet his was no cold, Socinian, semi-infidel belief, but a living, hearty assent to evangelical truths, and a thankful acceptance and application of the "good tidings" to his own case and needs.

So we find, not only in his public speeches but in his private letters, frequent acknowledgment of the Divine Providence which unravels the bewildering complications of earth, and of the Divine mercy which is bestowed upon us through Christ. When a motto was wanted for the façade of the new Royal Exchange, Prince Albert at once suggested the beautiful and appropriate passage from Psalm xxiv., which adorns that central shrine of a world's commerce: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." In the private apartments at Windsor Castle, at the top of the Queen's staircase, stands a fine statue,—from the studio of Baron Triqueti,—which represents Edward VI. looking earnestly upon a Bible which he holds in his left hand, and pointing with his sceptre to a passage in the Sacred Book, which, upon close inspection, proves to be the following: "Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left." This statue was executed by Prince Albert's direction; and while he intended it to convey to his son an

intimation of the rule by which his life should constantly be modelled, it serves as a lasting memorial of the principle by which he himself was ever animated and guided,—the resolve to do “that which was right in the sight of the Lord.”

The Prince’s character and career cannot be summed up in better words than those of the Poet Laureate, in his Dedication to *The Idylls of the King* :

“ We have lost him : he is gone :
We know him now : all narrow jealousies
Are silent ; and we see him as he moved,
How modest, kindly, all-accomplished, wise,
With what sublime repression of himself,
And in what limits, and how tenderly ;
Not swaying to this faction or to that ;
Not making his high place the lawless perch
Of wing’d ambitions, nor a vantage-ground
For pleasure, but through all this tract of years
Wearing the white flower of a blameless life.

* * * * *

“ Sweet nature gilded by the gracious gleam
Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,
Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince indeed,
Beyond all titles, and a household name,
Hereafter, through all times, ALBERT THE GOOD ! ”



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